

DISSERTATION FIRST:

EXHIBITING A GENERAL VIEW OF THE

PROGRESS OF METAPHYSICAL, ETHICAL,

AND

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY,

SINCE THE REVIVAL OF LETTERS IN EUROPE.

PART II.

BY DUGALD STEWART, Esq.

F. R. SS. London and Edinburgh, &c. &c.

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SOME apology, I am afraid, is necessary for the length to which this Dissertation has already extended. My original design (as is well known to my friends) was to comprise in ten or twelve sheets all the preliminary matter which I was to contribute to this SUPPLEMENT. But my work grew insensibly under my hands, till it assumed a form which obliged me either to destroy all that I had written, or to continue my Historical Sketches on the same enlarged scale. In selecting the subjects on which I have chiefly dwelt, I have been guided by my own idea of their pre-eminent importance, when considered in connection with the present state of Philosophy in Europe. On some, which I have passed over unnoticed, it was impossible for me to touch, without a readier access to public libraries than I can command in this retirement. The same circumstance will, I trust, account, in the opinion of candid readers, for various other omissions in my performance.

The time unavoidably spent in consulting, with critical care, the numerous Authors referred to in this and in the

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former part of my Discourse, has encroached so deeply, and to myself so painfully, on the leisure which I had destined for a different purpose, that, at my advanced years, I can entertain but a very faint expectation (though I do not altogether abandon the hope) of finishing my intended Sketch of the Progress of Ethical and Political Philosophy during the Eighteenth Century. An undertaking of a much earlier date has a prior and stronger claim on my attention. At all events, whatever may be wanting to complete my plan, it cannot be difficult for another hand to supply. An Outline is all that should be attempted on such a subject; and the field which it has to embrace will be found incomparably more interesting to most readers than that which has fallen under my review.

KINNEIL HOUSE, AUGUST 7, 1821.

John Adams

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PART II.

By DUGALD STEWART, Esq. F. R. SS. LOND. AND EDIN.

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DISSERTATION FIRST.

PART II.

IN the farther prosecution of the plan of which I traced the outline in the Preface to the First Part of this Dissertation, I find it necessary to depart considerably from the arrangement which I adopted in treating of the Philosophy of the seventeenth century. During that period, the literary intercourse between the different nations of Europe was comparatively so slight, that it seemed advisable to consider, separately and successively, the progress of the mind in England, in France, and in Germany. But from the era at which we are now arrived, *the Republic of Letters* may be justly understood to comprehend, not only these and other countries in their neighbourhood, but every region of the civilized earth. Disregarding, accordingly, all diversities of language and of geographical situation, I shall direct my attention to the intellectual progress of the species in general; enlarging, however, chiefly on the Philosophy of those parts of Europe, from whence the rays of science have, in modern times, diverged to the other quarters of the globe. I propose also, in consequence of the thickening crowd of useful authors, keeping pace in their numbers with the diffusion of knowledge and of liberality, to allot separate discourses to the history of Metaphysics, of Ethics, and of Politics; a dis-

tribution which, while it promises a more distinct and connected view of these different subjects, will furnish convenient resting-places, both to the writer and to the reader, and can scarcely fail to place, in a stronger and more concentrated light, whatever general conclusions may occur in the course of this survey.

The foregoing considerations, combined with the narrow limits assigned to the sequel of my work, will sufficiently account for the contracted scale of some of the following sketches, when compared with the magnitude of the questions to which they relate, and the peculiar interest which they derive from their immediate influence on the opinions of our own times.

In the case of Locke and Leibnitz, with whom the metaphysical history of the eighteenth century opens, I mean to allow myself a greater degree of latitude. The rank which I have assigned to both in my general plan, seems to require, of course, a more ample space for their leading doctrines, as well as for those of some of their contemporaries and immediate successors, than I can spare for metaphysical systems of a more modern date ; and as the rudiments of the most important of these are to be found in the speculations either of one or of the other, I shall endeavour, by connecting with my review of their works, those longer and more abstract discussions which are necessary for the illustration of fundamental principles, to avoid, as far as possible, in the remaining part of my discourse, any tedious digressions into the thorny paths of scholastic controversy. The critical remarks, accordingly, which I am now to offer on their philosophical writings, will, I trust, enable me to execute the very slight sketches which are to follow, in a manner at once more easy to myself, and more satisfactory to the bulk of my readers.

But what I have chiefly in view in these preliminary observations, is to correct certain misapprehensions concerning

the opinions of Locke and of Leibnitz, which have misled (with very few exceptions) all the later historians who have treated of the literature of the eighteenth century. I have felt a more particular solicitude to vindicate the fame of Locke, not only against the censures of his opponents, but against the mistaken comments and eulogies of his admirers, both in England and on the Continent. Appeals to his authority are so frequent in the reasonings of all who have since canvassed the same subjects, that, without a precise idea of his distinguishing tenets, it is impossible to form a just estimate, either of the merits or demerits of his successors. In order to assist my readers in this previous study, I shall endeavour, as far as I can, to make Locke his own commentator; earnestly entreating them, before they proceed to the sequel of this dissertation, to collate carefully those scattered extracts from his works, which, in the following section, they will find brought into contact with each other, with a view to their mutual illustration. My own conviction, I confess, is, that the *Essay on Human Understanding* has been much more generally applauded than read; and if I could only flatter myself with the hope of drawing the attention of the public from the glosses of commentators to the author's text, I should think that I had made a considerable step towards the correction of some radical and prevailing errors, which the supposed sanction of his name has hitherto sheltered from a free examination.

PROGRESS OF METAPHYSICS DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

SECTION I.HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS OF
LOCKE AND LEIBNITZ.

LOCKE.

BEFORE entering on the subject of this section, it is proper to premise, that, although my design is to treat separately of Metaphysics, Ethics, and Politics, it will be impossible to keep these sciences wholly unmixed in the course of my reflections. They all run into each other by insensible gradations; and they have all been happily united in the comprehensive speculations of some of the most distinguished writers of the eighteenth century. The connection between Metaphysics and Ethics is more peculiarly close; the theory of Morals having furnished, ever since the time of Cudworth, several of the most abstruse questions which have been agitated concerning the general principles, both intellectual and active, of the human frame. The inseparable affinity, however, between the different branches of the Philosophy of the Mind, does not afford any argument against the arrangement which I have adopted. It only shows, that it cannot, in every instance, be rigorously adhered to. It shall be my aim to deviate from it as seldom, and as slightly, as the miscellaneous nature of my materials will permit.

JOHN LOCKE, from the publication of whose *Essay on Human Understanding* a new era is to be dated in the History

of Philosophy, was born at Wrington in Somersetshire, in 1632. Of his father nothing remarkable is recorded, but that he was a captain in the Parliament's army during the civil wars; a circumstance which, it may be presumed from the son's political opinions, would not be regarded by him as a stain on the memory of his parent.

In the earlier part of Mr. Locke's life, he prosecuted for some years, with great ardour, the study of medicine; an art, however, which he never actually exercised as a profession. According to his friend Le Clerc, the delicacy of his constitution rendered this impossible. But, that his proficiency in the study was not inconsiderable, we have good evidence in the dedication prefixed to Dr. Sydenham's *Observations on the History and Cure of Acute Diseases*;¹ where he boasts of the approbation bestowed on his METHOD by Mr John Locke, who (to borrow Sydenham's own words) "examined it to the bottom; and who, if we consider his genius and penetrating and exact judgment, has scarce any superior, and few equals, now living." The merit of this METHOD, therefore, which still continues to be regarded as a model by the most competent judges, may be presumed to have belonged *in part* to Mr Locke,²—a circumstance which deserves to be noticed, as an additional confirmation of what Bacon has so

¹ Published in the year 1676.

² It is remarked of Sydenham, by the late Dr. John Gregory, "That though full of hypotheticalal reasoning, it had not the usual effect of making him less attentive to observation; and that his hypotheses seem to have sat so loosely about him, that either they did not influence his practice at all, or he could easily abandon them, whenever they would not bend to his experience."

This is precisely the idea of Locke concerning the true use of hypotheses. "Hypotheses, if they are well made, are at least great helps to the memory, and often direct us to new discoveries." Locke's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 81. See also some remarks on the same subject in one of his letters to Mr. Molyneux. (The edition of Locke to which I uniformly refer, is that printed at London in 1812, in ten volumes 8vo.)

sagaciously taught, concerning the dependence of all the sciences relating to the phenomena, either of Matter or of Mind, on principles and rules derived from the resources of a higher philosophy. On the other hand, no science could have been chosen, more happily calculated than Medicine, to prepare such a mind as that of Locke for the prosecution of those speculations which have immortalized his name; the complicated and fugitive, and often equivocal phenomena of disease, requiring in the observer a far greater portion of discriminating sagacity, than those of Physics, strictly so called; resembling, in this respect, much more nearly, the phenomena about which Metaphysics, Ethics, and Politics, are conversant.

I have said, that the study of Medicine forms one of the best preparations for the study of Mind, *to such an understanding as Locke's*. To an understanding less comprehensive, and less cultivated by a liberal education, the effect of this study is likely to be similar to what we may trace in the works of Hartley, Darwin, and Cabanis; to all of whom we may more or less apply the sarcasm of Cicero on Aristoxenus, the Musician, who attempted to explain the nature of the soul by comparing it to a *Harmony*; HIC AB ARTIFICIO SUO NON RECESSIT.¹ In Locke's *Essay*, not a single passage occurs, savouring of the Anatomical Theatre, or of the Chemical Laboratory.

In 1666, Mr Locke, then in his thirty-fifth year, formed an intimate acquaintance with Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury; from which period a complete change took place, both in the direction of his studies, and in his habits of life. His attention appears to have been then turned, for the first time, to political subjects; and his place of residence transferred from the university to the metropolis. From London (a scene which gave him access to a society very

¹ Tusc. Quæst. Lib. I.

different from what he had previously lived in¹) he occasionally passed over to the Continent, where he had an opportunity of profiting by the conversation of some of the most distinguished persons of his age. In the course of his foreign excursions, he visited France, Germany, and Holland; but the last of these countries seems to have been his favourite place of residence; the blessings which the people there enjoyed, under a government peculiarly favourable to civil and religious liberty, amply compensating, in his view, for what their uninviting territory wanted in point of scenery and of climate. In this respect, the coincidence between the taste of Locke and that of Descartes throws a pleasing light on the characters of both.

The plan of the *Essay on Human Understanding* is said to have been formed as early as 1670; but the various employments and avocations of the Author prevented him from finishing it till 1687, when he fortunately availed himself of the leisure which his exile in Holland afforded him, to complete his long meditated design. He returned to England soon after the Revolution, and published the first edition of his work in 1690; the busy and diversified scenes through which he had passed during its progress, having probably contributed, not less than the academical retirement in which he had spent his youth, to enhance its peculiar and characteristic merits.

Of the circumstances which gave occasion to this great and memorable undertaking, the following interesting account is given in the *Prefatory Epistle to the Reader*. "Five or six friends, meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had a while puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a

¹ Villiers Duke of Buckingham, and the Lord Halifax, are particularly mentioned among those who were delighted with his conversation.

resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course, and that, before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the company, who all readily assented, and thereupon it was agreed, that this should be our first inquiry. Some hasty and undigested thoughts on a subject I had never before considered, which I set down against our next meeting, gave the first entrance into this discourse, which having been thus begun by chance, was continued by entreaty; written by incoherent parcels, and, after long intervals of neglect, resumed again as my humour or occasions permitted; and at last in retirement, where an attendance on my health gave me leisure, it was brought into that order thou now seest it."

Mr. Locke afterwards informs us, that "when he first put pen to paper, he thought all he should have to say on this matter would have been contained in one sheet, but that the farther he went the larger prospect he had;—new discoveries still leading him on, till his book grew insensibly to the bulk it now appears in."

On comparing the *Essay on Human Understanding* with the foregoing account of its origin and progress, it is curious to observe, that it is the fourth and last book alone which bears directly on the author's principal object. In this book, it is further remarkable, that there are few, if any, references to the preceding parts of the *Essay*; insomuch that it might have been published separately, without being less intelligible than it is. Hence, it seems not unreasonable to conjecture, that it was the *first* part of the work in the order of composition, and that it contains those leading and fundamental thoughts which offered themselves to the author's mind, when he first began to reflect on the friendly conversation which gave rise to his philosophical researches. The

inquiries in the first and second books, which are of a much more abstract, as well as scholastic, nature, than the sequel of the work, probably opened gradually on the author's mind, in proportion as he studied his subject with a closer and more continued attention. They relate chiefly to the origin and to the technical classification of our ideas, frequently branching out into *collateral*, and sometimes into *digressive*, discussions, without much regard to method or connection. The third book (by far the most important of the whole), where the nature, the use, and the abuse of language are so clearly and happily illustrated, seems, from Locke's own account, to have been a sort of *after-thought*; and the two excellent chapters on the *Association of Ideas* and on *Enthusiasm* (the former of which has contributed, as much as any thing else in Locke's writings, to the subsequent progress of Metaphysical Philosophy) were printed, for the first time, in the fourth edition of the Essay.

I would not be understood, by these remarks, to undervalue the two first books. All that I have said amounts to this, that the subjects which they treat of are seldom susceptible of any practical application to the conduct of the understanding; and that the author has adopted a new phraseology of his own, where, in some instances, he might have much more clearly conveyed his meaning without any departure from the ordinary forms of speech. But although these considerations render the two first books inferior in point of general utility to the two last, they do not materially detract from their merit, as a precious accession to the theory of the Human Mind. On the contrary, I do not hesitate to consider them as the richest contribution of well-observed and well-described facts, which was ever bequeathed to this branch of science by a single individual; and as the indisputable (though not always acknowledged) source of some of the most refined conclusions, with respect to the intellectual phenomena, which have been since brought to light by succeeding inquirers.

After the details given by Locke himself, of the circumstances in which his Essay was begun and completed; more especially, after what he has stated of the "discontinued way of writing," imposed on him by the avocations of a busy and unsettled life, it cannot be thought surprising, that so very little of method should appear in the disposition of his materials; or that the opinions which, on different occasions, he has pronounced on the same subject, should not always seem perfectly steady and consistent. In these last cases, however, I am inclined to think that the inconsistencies, if duly reflected on, would be found rather apparent than real. It is but seldom, that a writer possessed of the powerful and upright mind of Locke, can reasonably be suspected of stating propositions in direct contradiction to each other. The presumption is, that, in each of these propositions, there is a mixture of truth, and that the error lies chiefly in the unqualified manner in which the truth is stated; proper allowances not being made, during the fervour of composition, for the partial survey taken of the objects from a particular point of view. Perhaps it would not be going too far to assert, that most of the seeming contradictions which occur in authors animated with a sincere love of truth, might be fairly accounted for by the different aspects which the same object presented to them upon different occasions. In reading such authors, accordingly, when we meet with discordant expressions, instead of indulging ourselves in the captiousness of verbal criticism, it would better become us carefully and candidly to collate the questionable passages; and to study so to reconcile them by judicious modifications and corrections, as to render the oversights and mistakes of our illustrious guides subservient to the precision and soundness of our own conclusions. In the case of Locke, it must be owned, that this is not always an easy task, as the limitations of some of his most exceptionable propositions are to be col-

lected, not from the context, but from different and widely separated parts of his Essay.¹

In a work thus composed *by snatches* (to borrow a phrase of the author's), it was not to be expected, that he should be able accurately to draw the line between his own ideas, and the hints for which he was indebted to others. To those who are well acquainted with his speculations, it must appear evident, that he had studied diligently the metaphysical writings both of Hobbes and of Gassendi; and that he was no stranger to the *Essays* of Montaigne, to the philosophical works of Bacon, or to Malebranche's *Inquiry after Truth*.² That he was familiarly conversant with the Cartesian system may be presumed from what we are told by his biographer, that it was *this* which first inspired him with a disgust at the jargon of the schools, and led him into that train of thinking which he afterwards prosecuted so successfully. I do not, however, recollect that he has anywhere in his Essay mentioned the name of any one of these authors.³ It is proba-

¹ That Locke himself was sensible that some of his expressions required explanation, and was anxious that his opinions should be judged of rather from the general tone and spirit of his work, than from detached and isolated propositions, may be inferred from a passage in one of his notes, where he replies to the animadversions of one of his antagonists (the Reverend Mr. Lowde), who had accused him of calling in question the immutability of moral distinction. "But (says Locke) the good man does well, and as becomes his calling, to be watchful in such points, and to take the alarm, even at expressions, which, standing alone by themselves, might sound ill, and be suspected." (Locke's *Works*, Vol. II. p. 93. Note.)

² Mr. Addison has remarked, that Malebranche had the start of Locke, by several years, in his notions on the subject of *Duration*. (Spectator, No. 94.) Some other coincidences, not less remarkable, might be easily pointed out in the opinions of the English and of the French philosopher.

³ The name of Hobbes occurs in Mr. Locke's *Reply to the Bishop of Worcester*. See the Notes on his Essay, b. iv. c. 3. It is curious that he classes Hobbes and Spinoza together, as writers of the same stamp; and that he disclaims any intimate ac-

ble, that, when he sat down to write, he found the result of his youthful reading so completely identified with the fruits of his subsequent reflections, that it was impossible for him to attempt a separation of the one from the other ; and that he was thus occasionally led to mistake the treasures of memory for those of invention. That this was really the case, may be farther presumed from the peculiar and original cast of his phraseology, which, though in general careless and unpolished, has always the merit of that characteristical unity and *raciness* of style, which demonstrate, that, while he was writing, he conceived himself to be drawing only from his own resources.

With respect to his style, it may be further observed, that it resembles that of a well educated and well informed man of the world, rather than of a recluse student who had made an object of the art of composition. It every where abounds with colloquial expressions, which he had probably caught by the ear from those whom he considered as models of good conversation ; and hence, though it now seems somewhat antiquated, and not altogether suited to the dignity of the subject, it may be presumed to have contributed its share towards his great object of turning the thoughts of his contemporaries to logical and metaphysical inquiries. The author of the *Characteristics*, who will not be accused of an undue partiality for Locke, acknowledges, in strong terms, the favourable reception which his book had met with among the higher classes. "I am not sorry, however," says Shaftesbury, to one of his correspondents, "that I lent you Locke's Essay, a book that may as well qualify men for business and the world, as for the sciences and a university. No one has

quaintance with the works of either. "I am not so well read in *Hobbes* and *Spinoza* as to be able to say what were their opinions in this matter, but possibly there be those who think your Lordship's authority of more use than those justly decried names," &c. &c.

done more towards the recalling of philosophy from barbarity, into use and practice of the world, and into the company of the better and politer sort, who might well be ashamed of it in its other dress. No one has opened a better and clearer way to reasoning.”¹

In a passage of one of Warburton’s letters to Hurd, which I had occasion to quote in the first part of this Dissertation, it is stated as a fact, that, “when Locke first published his Essay, he had neither followers nor admirers, and hardly a single approver.” I cannot help suspecting very strongly the correctness of this assertion, not only from the flattering terms in which the Essay is mentioned by Shaftesbury in the foregoing quotation, and from the frequent allusions to its doctrines by Addison and other popular writers of the same period, but from the unexampled sale of the book, during the fourteen years which elapsed between its publication and Locke’s death. Four editions were printed in the space of ten years, and three others must have appeared in the space of the next four; a reference being made to the *sixth* edition by the author himself, in the epistle to the reader, prefixed to all the subsequent impressions. A copy of the thirteenth edition, printed as early as 1748, is now lying before me. So rapid and so extensive a circulation of a work, on a subject so little within the reach of common readers, is the best proof of the established popularity of the author’s name, and of the respect generally entertained for his talents and his opinions.

That the *Essay on Human Understanding* should have excited some alarm in the University of Oxford, was no more than the author had reason to expect from his boldness as a philosophical reformer; from his avowed zeal in the cause of liberty, both civil and religious; from the suspect-

¹ See Shaftesbury’s First Letter to a Student at the University.

ed orthodoxy of his Theological Creed ; and (it is but candid to add) from the apparent coincidence of his ethical doctrines with those of Hobbes.¹ It is more difficult to account for the long continuance, in that illustrious seat of learning, of the prejudice against the *logic* of Locke (by far the most valuable part of his work), and of that partiality for the logic of Aristotle, of which Locke has so fully exposed the futility. In the University of Cambridge, on the other hand, the *Essay on Human Understanding* was, for many years, regarded with a reverence approaching to idolatry : and to the authority of some distinguished persons connected with that learned body may be traced (as will afterwards appear) the origin of the greater part of the extravagancies which, towards the close of the last century, were grafted on Locke's errors, by the disciples of Hartley, of Law, of Priestley, of Tooke, and of Darwin.²

¹ "It was proposed at a meeting of the heads of houses of the University of Oxford, to censure and discourage the reading of Locke's *Essay* ; and, after various debates among themselves, it was concluded, that each head of a house should endeavour to prevent its being read in his college, without coming to any public censure." (See Des Maizeaux's note on a letter from Locke to Collins. *Locke's Works*, Vol. X. p. 284.)

² I have taken notice, with due praise, in the former part of this discourse, of the metaphysical speculations of John Smith, Henry More, and Ralph Cudworth ; all of them members and ornaments of the university of Cambridge about the middle of the seventeenth century. They were deeply conversant in the Platonic Philosophy, and applied it with great success in combating the Materialists and Necessitarians of their times. They carried, indeed, some of their Platonic notions to an excess bordering on mysticism, and may, perhaps, have contributed to give a bias to some of their academical successors towards the opposite extreme. A very pleasing and interesting account of the characters of these amiable and ingenious men, and of the spirit of their philosophy, is given by Burnet in the *History of his Own Times*.

To the credit of Smith and of More it may be added, that they were among the first in England to perceive and to acknowledge the merits of the Cartesian Metaphysics.

To a person who now reads with attention and candour the work in question, it is much more easy to enter into the prejudices which at first opposed themselves to its complete success, than to conceive how it should so soon have acquired its just celebrity. Something, I suspect, must be ascribed to the political importance which Mr. Locke had previously acquired as the champion of religious toleration; as the great apostle of the Revolution; and as the intrepid opposer of a tyranny which had been recently overthrown.

In Scotland, where the liberal constitution of the universities has been always peculiarly favourable to the diffusion of a free and eclectic spirit of inquiry, the philosophy of Locke seems very early to have struck its roots, deeply and permanently, into a kindly and congenial soil. Nor were the errors of this great man implicitly adopted from a blind reverence for his name. The works of Descartes still continued to be studied and admired; and the combined systems of the English and the French metaphysicians served, in many respects, to correct what was faulty, and to supply what was deficient, in either. As to the *ethical* principles of Locke, where they appear to lean towards Hobbism, a powerful antidote against them was already prepared in the Treatise *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, which was then universally and deservedly regarded in this country as the best introduction that had yet appeared to the study of moral science. If Scotland, at this period, produced no eminent authors in these branches of learning, it was not from want of erudition or of talents; nor yet from the narrowness of mind incident to the inhabitants of remote and insulated regions; but from the almost insuperable difficulty of writing in a dialect, which imposed upon an author the double task of at once acquiring a new language, and of unlearning his own.¹

¹ Note (A.)

The success of Locke's Essay, in some parts of the Continent, was equally remarkable; owing, no doubt, in the first instance, to the very accurate translation of it into the French language by Coste, and to the eagerness with which every thing proceeding from the author of the *Letters on Toleration*¹ may be presumed to have been read by the multitude of learned and enlightened refugees, whom the revocation of the edict of Nantz forced to seek an asylum in Protestant countries. In Holland, where Locke was personally known to the most distinguished characters, both literary and political, his work was read and praised by a discerning few, with all the

¹ The principle of religious toleration was at that time very imperfectly admitted, even by those philosophers who were the most zealously attached to the cause of civil liberty. The great Scottish lawyer and statesman, Lord Stair (himself no mean philosopher, and, like Locke, a warm partizan of the Revolution,) seems evidently to have regretted the impunity which Spinoza had experienced in Holland, and Hobbes in England. "Execrabilis ille Atheus Spinosæ adeo impudens est, ut affirmet omnia esse absolute necessaria, et nihil quod est, fuit, aut erit, aliter fieri potuisse, in quo omnes superiores Atheos excessit, aperte negans omnem Deitatem, nihilque præter potentias naturæ agnoscens.

"Vaninus Deitatem non aperte negavit, sed causam illius prodidit, in tractatu quem edidit, argumenta pro Dei existentia tanquam futilia et vana rejiciens, adferendo contrarias omnes rationes per modum objectionum, easque proseguendo ut indissolubiles videantur; postea tamen larvam exuit, et atheismum clare professus est, ET JUSTISSIME IN INCLYTA URBE THOLOSA DAMNATUS EST ET CREMATUS.

"Horrendus Hobbesius tertius erat atheismi promotor, qui omnia principia moralia et politica subvertit, eorumque loco naturalem vim et humana pacta, ut prima principia moralitatis, societatis, et politici regiminis substituit: NEC TAMEN SPINOSA AUT HOBBIUS, QUAMVIS IN REGIONIBUS REFORMATIS VIXERINT ET MORTUI SINT, NEDUM EXEMPLA FACTI SUNT IN ATHEORUM TERROR, UT NE VEL ULLAM PÆNAM SENSERINT."—*Physiol. Nova Experimentalis* (Lugd. Batav. 1666), pp. 16, 17.

partiality of friendship;¹ but it does not seem to have made its way into the schools till a period considerably later. The doctrines of Descartes, at first so vehemently opposed in that country, were now so completely triumphant, both among philosophers and divines,² that it was difficult for a new reformer to obtain a hearing. The case was very nearly similar in Germany, where Leibnitz (who always speaks coldly of Locke's Essay)³ was then looked up to as the great oracle in every branch of learning and of science. If I am not mistaken, it was in Swit-

¹ Among those whose society Locke chiefly cultivated while in Holland, was the celebrated Le Clerc, the author of the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, and the *Bibliothèque Choisie*, besides many other learned and ingenious publications. He appears to have been warmly attached to Locke, and embraced the fundamental doctrines of his Essay without any slavish deference for his authority. Though he fixed his residence at Amsterdam, where he taught Philosophy and the Belles Lettres, he was a native of Geneva, where he also received his academical education. He is, therefore, to be numbered with Locke's Swiss disciples. I shall have occasion to speak of him more at length afterwards, when I come to mention his controversy with Bayle. At present, I shall only observe, that his Eloge on Locke was published in the *Bibliothèque Choisie* (Année 1705), Tom. VI.; and that some important remarks on the *Essay on Human Understanding* (particularly on the chapter on Power) are to be found in the 12th Vol. of the same work (Année 1707).

² Quamvis huic sectæ (Cartesianæ) initio acriter se opponerent Theologi et Philosophi Belgæ, in Academiis tamen eorum hodie (1727), vix alia, quam Cartesiana principia inculcantur. (Heineccii *Elem. Hist. Philosoph.*) In Gravesande's *Introductio ad Philosophiam*, published in 1736, the name of Locke is not once mentioned. It is probable that this last author was partly influenced by his admiration for Leibnitz, whom he servilely followed even in his *physical* errors.

³ In Lockio sunt quædam particularia non male exposita, sed in summâ longe aberravit à januâ, nec naturam mentis veritatisque intellexit.—Leibnitz. Op. Tom. V. p. 355. Ed. Dutens.

M. Locke avoit de la subtilité et de l'adresse, et quelque espèce de métaphysique superficielle qu'il savoit relever. (*Ibid.* pp. 11, 12.)

zerland, where (as Gibbon observes) "the intermixture of sects had rendered the clergy acute and learned on controversial topics," that Locke's real merits were first appreciated on the Continent with a discriminating impartiality. In Crousaz's *Treatise of Logic* (a book which, if not distinguished by originality of genius, is at least strongly marked with the sound and unprejudiced judgment of the author), we everywhere trace the influence of Locke's doctrines; and, at the same time, the effects of the Cartesian Metaphysics, in limiting those hasty expressions of Locke, which have been so often misinterpreted by his followers.¹ Nor do Crousaz's academical labours appear to

Heineccius, a native of Saxony, in a *Sketch of the History of Philosophy*, printed in 1728, omits altogether the name of Locke in his enumeration of the logical and metaphysical writers of modern Europe. In a passage of his logic, where the same author treats of *clear* and *obscure*, *adequate* and *inadequate ideas* (a subject on which little or nothing of any value had been advanced before Locke), he observes, in a note, "*Debemus hanc Doctrinam Leibnitio, eamque deinde sequutus est illust. Wolfius.*"

¹ Of the *Essay on Human Understanding* Crousaz speaks in the following terms: "Clarissimi, et meritò celebratissimi Lockii de Intellectu Humano eximium opus, et auctore suo dignissimum, *logicis* utilissimis semper annumerabitur." (Præfat.) If Pope had ever looked into this *Treatise*, he could not have committed so gross a mistake, as to introduce the author into the *Dunciad*, among Locke's Aristotelian opponents; a distinction for which Crousaz was probably indebted to his acute strictures on those passages in the *Essay on Man*, which seem favourable to fatalism.

Prompt at the call, around the goddess roll
Broad hats, and hoods, and caps, a sable shoal;
Thick and more thick the black blockade extends,
A hundred head of Aristotle's friends.
Nor wer't thou, Isis! wanting to the day
(Though Christ-church long kept prudishly away).
Each staunch Polemic, stubborn as a rock,
Each fierce Logician, still expelling Locke,
Came whip and spur, and dash'd through thin and thick
On German Crousaz, and Dutch Burgersdyck.

have been less useful than his writings ; if a judgment on this point may be formed from the sound philosophical prin-

Warburton, with his usual scurrility towards all Pope's adversaries as well as his own, has called Crousaz a *blundering Swiss* ; but a very different estimate of his merits has been formed by Gibbon, who seems to have studied his works much more carefully than the Right Reverend Commentator on the *Dunciad*.

" M. de Crousaz, the adversary of Bayle and Pope, is not distinguished by lively fancy or profound reflection ; and even in his own country, at the end of a few years, his name and writings are almost obliterated. But his Philosophy had been formed in the school of Locke, his Divinity in that of Limborch and Le Clerc ; in a long and laborious life, several generations of pupils were taught to think, and even to write ; his lessons rescued the Academy of Lausanne from Calvinistic prejudices ; and he had the rare merit of diffusing a more liberal spirit among the people of the *pays de Vaud*." (Gibbon's *Memoirs*.)

In a subsequent passage Gibbon says, " The logic of Crousaz had prepared me to engage with his master Locke, and his antagonist Bayle ; of whom the former may be used as a bridle, and the latter applied as a spur to the curiosity of a young philosopher." (*Ibid.*)

The following details (independently of their reference to Crousaz) are so interesting in themselves, and afford so strong a testimony to the utility of logical studies, when rationally conducted, that I am tempted to transcribe them.

" December 1755. In finishing this year, I must remark how favourable it was to my studies. In the space of eight months, I learned the principles of drawing ; made myself completely master of the French and Latin languages, with which I was very superficially acquainted before, and wrote and translated a great deal in both ; read Cicero's Epistles ad Familiares, his Brutus, all his Orations, his Dialogues de Amicitia et de Senectute ; Terence twice, and Pliny's Epistles. In French, Giannoni's History of Naples, l'Abbé Banier's Mythology, and M. Roehat's Mémoires sur la Suisse, and wrote a very ample relation of my tour. I likewise began to study Greek, and went through the grammar. I began to make very large collections of what I read. But what I esteem most of all,—from the perusal and meditation of De Crousaz's logic, I not only understood the principles of that science, but formed my mind to a habit of thinking and reasoning, I had no idea of before."

ciples which he diffused among a numerous race of pupils. One of these (M. Allemand), the friend and correspondent of Gibbon, deserves particularly to be noticed here, on account of two letters published in the posthumous works of that historian, containing a criticism on Locke's argument against innate ideas, so very able and judicious, that it may still be read with advantage by many logicians of no small note in the learned world. Had these letters happened to have sooner attracted my attention, I should not have delayed so long to do this tardy justice to their merits.¹

I am not able to speak with confidence of the period at which Locke's Essay began to attract public notice in France. Voltaire, in a letter to Horace Walpole, asserts, that he was the first person who made the name of Locke known to his countrymen;² but I suspect that this assertion

After all, I very readily grant, that Crousaz's logic is chiefly to be regarded as the work of a sagacious and enlightened compiler; but even this (due allowance being made for the state of philosophy when it appeared) is no mean praise. "Good sense (as Gibbon has very truly observed) is a quality of mind hardly less rare than genius."

¹ For some remarks of M. Allemand, which approach very near to Reid's Objections to the Ideal Theory, See Note (B.)

Of this extraordinary man Gibbon gives the following account in his *Journal*: "C'est un ministre dans le Pays de Vaud, et un des plus beaux génies que je connoisse. Il a voulu embrasser tous les genres; mais c'est la Philosophie qu'il a le plus approfondi. Sur toutes les questions il s'est fait des systèmes, ou du moins des argumens toujours originaux et toujours ingénieux. Ses idées sont fines et lumineuses, son expression heureuse et facile. On lui reproche avec raison trop de raffinement et de subtilité dans l'ésprit; trop de fierté, trop d'ambition, et trop de violence dans le caractère. Cet homme, qui auroit pu éclairer ou troubler une nation, vit et mourra dans l'obscurité."

It is of the same person that Gibbon sneeringly says (in the words of Vossius), "*Est sacrificulus in pago, et rusticos decipit.*"

² "Je peux vous assurer qu'avant moi personne en France ne connoissoit la poesie Angloise; à peine avoit on entendu parler

must be received with considerable qualifications. The striking coincidence between some of Locke's most celebrated doctrines and those of Gassendi, can scarcely be supposed to have been altogether overlooked by the followers and admirers of the latter; considering the immediate and very general circulation given on the Continent to the *Essay on Human Understanding*, by Coste's French version. The *Gassendists*, too, it must be remembered, formed, even before the death of their master, a party formidable in talents as well as in numbers; including, among other distinguished names, those of Moliere,¹ Cha-

de Locke. J'ai été persecuté pendant trente ans par une nuée de fanatiques pour avoir dit que Locke est l'Hercule de la Métaphysique, qui a posé les bornes de l'Esprit Humain." (Ferry, 1768.)

In the following passage of *the Age of Louis XIV.* the same celebrated writer is so lavish and undistinguishing in his praise of Locke, as almost to justify a doubt whether he had ever read the book which he extols so highly. "Locke seul a développé l'entendement humain, dans un livre où il n'y a que des vérités; et ce qui rend l'ouvrage parfait, toutes ces vérités sont claires."

¹ Moliere was in his youth so strongly attached to the Epicurean theories, that he had projected a translation of Lucretius into French. He is even said to have made some progress in executing his design, when a trifling accident determined him; in a moment of ill humour, to throw his manuscript into the fire. The plan on which he was to proceed in this bold undertaking does honour to his good sense and good taste, and seems to me the only one on which a successful version of Lucretius can ever be executed. The didactic passages of the poem were to be translated into prose, and the descriptive passages into verse. Both parts would have gained greatly by this compromise; for, where Lucretius wishes to unfold the philosophy of his master, he is not less admirable for the perspicuity and precision of his expressions, than he is on other occasions, where his object is to detain and delight the imaginations of his readers, for the charms of his figurative diction, and for the bold relief of his images. In instances of the former kind, no modern language can give even the *semblance* of poetry to the theories of Epicurus; while, at the same time, in the vain at-

pelle,¹ and Bernier;² all of them eminently calculated to give the tone, on disputed questions of Metaphysics, to

tempt to conquer this difficulty, the rigorous precision and simplicity of the original are inevitably lost.

The influence of Gassendi's instructions may be traced in several of Moliere's comedies; particularly in the *Femmes Savantes*, and in a little piece *Le Mariage Forcé*, where an Aristotelian and a Cartesian doctor are both held up to the same sort of ridicule, which, in some other of his performances, he has so lavishly bestowed on the medical professors of his time.

¹ The joint author with Bachaumont, of the *Voyage en Provence*, which is still regarded as the most perfect model of that light, easy, and graceful *badinage* which seems to belong exclusively to French poetry. Gassendi, who was an intimate friend of his father, was so charmed with his vivacity while a boy, that he condescended to be his instructor in philosophy; admitting, at the same time, to his lessons, two other illustrious pupils, Moliere and Bernier. The life of Chapelle, according to all his biographers, exhibited a complete contrast to the simple and ascetic manners of his master; but, if the following account is to be credited, he missed no opportunity of propagating, as widely as he could, the speculative principles in which he had been educated. "Il étoit fort éloquent dans l'ivresse. Il restoit ordinairement le dernier à table, et se mettoit à expliquer aux valets la philosophie d'Epicure." (*Biographie Universelle*, article *Chapelle*, Paris, 1813.) He died in 1686.

² The well known author of one of our most interesting and instructive books of travels. After his return from the East, where he resided twelve years at the court of the Great Mogul, he published, at Lyons, an excellent *Abridgment of the Philosophy of Gassendi*, in 8 vols. 12mo; a second edition of which, corrected by himself, afterwards appeared, in seven volumes. To this second edition (which I have never met with) is annexed a Supplement, entitled *Doutes de M. Bernier sur quelques uns des principaux Chapitres de son Abrégé de la Philosophie de Gassendi*. It is to this work, I presume, that Leibnitz alludes in the following passage of a letter to John Bernouilli; and, from the manner in which he speaks of its contents, it would seem to be an object of some curiosity. "Frustra quæsi apud typographos librum cui titulus; *Doutes de M. Bernier sur la Philosophie*, in Gallia ante annos aliquot editum et mihi visum, sed nunc non repertum. Vellem autem idè iterum legere, quia ille *Gassendistorum* fuit Princeps; sed paullo ante mortem, libello hoc edito ingenue professus est, in quibus nec Gassendus

that numerous class of Parisians of both sexes, with whom the practical lessons, vulgarly imputed to Epicurus, were not likely to operate to the prejudice of his speculative principles. Of the three persons just mentioned, the two last died only a few years before Locke's *Essay* was published; and may be presumed to have left behind them many younger pupils of the same school. One thing is certain, that, long before the middle of the last century, the *Essay on Human Understanding* was not only read by the learned, but had made its way into the circles of fashion at Paris.¹ In what manner this is to be accounted for, it is not easy to say; but the fact will not be disputed by those who are at all acquainted with the history of French literature.

In consequence of this rapid and extensive circulation of the work in question, and the strong impression that it every where produced, by the new and striking contrast which it exhibited to the doctrines of the schools, a very remarkable change soon manifested itself in the prevailing habits of thinking on philosophical subjects. Not that it is to be supposed that the opinions of men, on particular articles of their former creed, underwent a sudden alteration. I speak only of the *general effect* of Locke's discussions, in preparing the thinking part of his readers, to a degree till then unknown, for the unshackled use of their own reason. This has always appeared to me the most characteristic feature of Locke's *Essay*; and *that* to which it is chiefly indebted for its immense influence on the philosophy of the eighteenth century. Few books can be named, from which it is possible to extract more exceptionable

nec Cartesius satisfaciant." (Leibnitii et Jo. Bernouilli *Commerc. Epist.* 2 vol. 4to. Laussanæ et Genève, 1745.)

Bernier died in 1688.

¹ A decisive proof of this is afforded by the allusions to Locke's doctrines in the dramatic pieces then in possession of the French stage. See Note (C.)

passages; but, such is the liberal tone of the author; such the manliness with which he constantly appeals to *reason*, as the paramount authority which, even in religious controversy, every candid disputant is bound to acknowledge; and such the sincerity and simplicity with which, on all occasions, he appears to inquire after truth, that the *general effect* of the whole work may be regarded as the best of all antidotes against the errors involved in some of its particular conclusions.¹

To attempt any general review of the doctrines sanctioned, or supposed to be sanctioned, by the name of Locke, would be obviously incompatible with the design of this Discourse; but, among these doctrines, there are *two* of fundamental importance, which have misled so many of his successors, that a few remarks on each form a necessary preparation for some historical details which will afterwards occur. The first of these doctrines relates to the ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS; the second to THE POWER OF MORAL PERCEPTION, AND THE IMMUTABILITY OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS. On *both* questions, the real opinion of Locke has, if I am not widely mistaken, been very grossly misapprehended or misrepresented, by a large portion of his professed followers, as well as of his avowed antagonists.

¹ The maxim which he constantly inculcates is, that "Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything." (Locke's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 145.) To the same purpose, he elsewhere observes, that "he who makes use of the light and faculties God has given him, and seeks sincerely to discover truth by those helps and abilities he has, may have this satisfaction in doing his duty as a rational creature; that, though he should miss truth, he will not miss the reward of it. For *he* governs his assent right, and places it as he should, who in any case or matter whatsoever, believes or disbelieves, according as reason directs him. He that does otherwise, transgresses against his own light, and misuses those faculties which were given him to no other end, but to search and follow the clearer evidence and greater probability." (*Ibid.* p. 125.)

1. The objections to which Locke's doctrine concerning the origin of our ideas, or, in other words, concerning the sources of our knowledge, are, in my judgment, liable, I have stated so fully in a former work,¹ that I shall not touch on them here. It is quite sufficient, on the present occasion, to remark, how very unjustly *this* doctrine, (imperfect, on the most favourable construction, as it undoubtedly is) has been confounded with those of Gassendi, of Condillac, of Diderot, and of Horne Tooke. The substance of all that is common in the conclusions of these last writers, cannot be better expressed than in the words of their master, Gassendi. "All our knowledge (he observes in a letter to Descartes) appears plainly to derive its origin from the senses; and although you deny the maxim, 'Quicquid est in intellectu præesse debere in sensu,' yet this maxim appears, nevertheless, to be true; since our knowledge is all ultimately obtained by an *influx* or *incursion* from things external; which knowledge afterwards undergoes various modifications by means of analogy, composition, division, amplification, extenuation, and other similar processes, which it is unnecessary to enumerate."²

¹ *Philosophical Essays.*

² "Deinde omnis nostra notitia videtur plane ducere originem à sensibus; et quamvis tu neges quicquid est in intellectu præesse debere in sensu, videtur id esse nihilominus verum, cum nisi solâ incursione *κατα περιπατον*, ut loquuntur, fiat; perficiatur tamen analogia, compositione, divisione, ampliatione, extenuatione, aliisque similibus modis, quos commemorare nihil est necesse." (*Objectiones in Meditationem Secundam.*)

This doctrine of Gassendi's is thus very clearly stated and illustrated, by the judicious authors of the *Port Royal Logic*. "Un philosophe qui est estimé dans le monde, commence sa logique par cette proposition: *Omnis idea orsum ducit a sensibus. Toute idée tire son origine des sens.* Il avoue néanmoins que toutes nos idées n'ont pas été dans nos sens telles qu'elles sont dans notre esprit: mais il prétend qu'elles ont au moins été formées de celles qui ont passé par nos sens, ou par *composition*, comme lorsque des images séparées de l'or et d'une montagne,

This doctrine of Gassendi's coincides exactly with that ascribed to Locke by Diderot and by Horne Tooke; and it

on s'en fait une montagne d'or; ou par *ampliation* et *diminution*, comme lorsque de l'image d'un homme d'une grandeur ordinaire on s'en forme un géant ou un pignée; ou par *accommodation* et *proportion*, comme lorsque de l'idée d'une maison qu'on a vue, on s'en forme l'image d'une maison qu'on n'a pas vue. Et AINSI, dit il, NOUS CONCEVONS DIEU QUI NE PEUT TOMBER SOUS LES SENS, SOUS L'IMAGE D'UN VENERABLE VIEILLARD." "Selon cette pensée, quoique toutes nos idées ne fussent semblables à quelque corps particulier que nous ayons vu, ou qui ait frappé nos sens, elles seroient néanmoins toutes corporelles, et ne vous representeroient rien qui ne fût entré dans nos sens, au moins par parties. Et ainsi nous ne concevons rien que par des images, semblables à celles qui se forment dans les cerveau quand nous voyons, ou nous nous imaginons des corps." (*L'Art de Penser*, 1 Partie. c. 1.)

The reference made, in the foregoing quotation, to Gassendi's illustration drawn from *the idea of God*, affords me an opportunity, of which I gladly avail myself, to contrast it with Locke's opinion on the same subject. "How many amongst us will be found, upon enquiry, to fancy God, in the shape of a man, sitting in heaven, and to have many other absurd and unfit conceptions of him? Christians, as well as Turks, have had whole sects owning, or contending earnestly for it, that the Deity was corporeal and of human shape: And although we find few amongst us, who profess themselves *Anthropomorphites* (though some I have met with that own it), yet, I believe, he that will make it his business, may find amongst the ignorant and uninstructed Christians, many of that opinion."* (Vol. I. p. 67.)

"Let the ideas of being and matter be strongly joined either by education or much thought, whilst these are still combined

* In the judgment of a very learned and pious divine, the bias towards *Anthropomorphism*, which Mr. Locke has here so severely reprehended, is not confined to "ignorant and uninstructed Christians." "If *Anthropomorphism* (says Dr. Maclaine) was banished from theology, orthodoxy would be deprived of some of its most precious phrases, and our confessions of faith and systems of doctrine would be reduced within much narrower bounds."—Note on Mosheim's *Church History*, Vol. IV. p. 550.)

In Bernier's *Abridgment of Gassendi's Philosophy* (Tom. III. p. 13 *et seq.*), an attempt is made to reconcile with the Epicurean account of the origin of our knowledge, that more pure and exalted idea of God to which the mind is gradually led by the exercise of its reasoning powers: But I am very doubtful, if Gassendi would have subscribed, in this instance, to the comments of his ingenious disciple. (See pp. 109, 110, of the first part of this Dissertation.)

differs only verbally from the more concise statement of Condillac, that "our ideas are nothing more than *transform-*

in the mind, what notions, what reasonings will there be about separate spirits? Let custom, from the very childhood, have joined figure and shape to the idea of God, and what absurdities will that mind be liable to about the Deity?" (Vol. II. p. 144.)

The authors of the *Port Royal Logic* have expressed themselves on this point to the very same purpose with Locke; and have enlarged upon it still more fully and forcibly. (See the sequel of the passage above quoted.) Some of their remarks on the subject, which are more particularly directed against Gassendi, have led Brucker to rank them among the advocates for *innate ideas* (Brucker, *Historia de Ideis*, p. 271), although these remarks coincide exactly in substance with the foregoing quotation from Locke. Like many other modern metaphysicians, this learned and laborious, but not very acute historian, could imagine no intermediate opinion between the theory of *innate ideas*, as taught by the Cartesians, and the Epicurean account of our knowledge, as revived by Gassendi and Hobbes; and accordingly thought himself entitled to conclude, that whoever rejected the one must necessarily have adopted the other. The doctrines of Locke and of his predecessor Arnauld will be found, on examination, essentially different from both.

Persons little acquainted with the metaphysical speculations of the two last centuries are apt to imagine, that when "all knowledge is said to have its origin in the senses," nothing more is to be understood than this, that it is by the impressions of external objects on our organs of perception, that the *dormant powers* of the understanding are at first awakened. The foregoing quotation from Gassendi, together with those which I am about to produce from Diderot and Condorcet, may, I trust, be useful in correcting this very common mistake; all of these quotations explicitly asserting, that the external senses furnish not only the *occasions* by which our intellectual powers are excited and developed, but all the *materials* about which our thoughts are conversant; or, in other words, that it is impossible for us to think of anything, which is not either a sensible image, or the result of sensible images combined together, and transmuted into new forms by a sort of logical chemistry. That the powers of the understanding would for ever continue dormant, were it not for the action of things external on the bodily frame, is a proposition now universally admitted by philosophers. Even Mr. Harris and Lord Monboddo, the two most zealous, as well as most learned, of Mr. Locke's adversaries in

ed sensations.” “Every idea,” says the first of these writers, “must necessarily, when brought to its state of ultimate decomposition, resolve itself into a *sensible* representation or picture; and since every thing *in* our understanding has been introduced there by the channel of sensation, whatever proceeds *out* of the understanding is either chimerical, or must be able, in returning by the same road, to reattach itself to its sensible archetype. Hence an important rule in philosophy,—that every expression which cannot find an external and a sensible object, to which it can thus establish its affinity, is destitute of signification.” (*Oeuvres de Diderot*, Tom. VI.)

Such is the exposition given by Diderot, of what is regarded in France, as Locke’s great and capital *discovery*; and precisely to the same purpose we are told by Condorcet, that “Locke was the first who proved that *all our ideas are compounded of sensations.*” (*Esquisse Historique, &c.*)

If this were to be admitted as a fair account of Locke’s opinion, it would follow, that he has not advanced a single

England, have, in the most explicit manner, expressed their assent to the common doctrine. “The first class of ideas (says Monboddo) is produced from ideas furnished by the senses; the second arises from the operations of the mind upon these materials: for I do not deny, that in this our present state of existence, all our ideas, and all our knowledge, are ultimately to be derived from sense and matter.” (Vol. I. p. 44. 2d Ed.) Mr. Harris, while he holds the same language, points out, with greater precision, the essential difference between his philosophy and that of the Hobbists. “Though sensible objects may be the destined medium to awaken the dormant energies of man’s understanding, yet are those energies themselves no more contained in sense, than the explosion of a cannon in the spark which gave it fire.” (Hermes.) (On this subject see *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. I. chap. i. sect. 4.)

To this doctrine I have little doubt that Descartes himself would have assented, although the contrary opinion has been generally supposed by his adversaries to be virtually involved in his *Theory of Innate Ideas*. My reasons for thinking so, the reader will find stated in Note (D.)

step beyond Gassendi and Hobbes; both of whom have repeatedly expressed themselves in nearly the same words with Diderot and Condorcet. But although it must be granted, in favour of their interpretation of his language, that various detached passages may be quoted from his work, which seem, on a superficial view, to justify their comments, yet of what weight, it may be asked, are these passages, when compared with the stress laid by the author on *Reflection*, as an original source of our ideas, altogether different from *Sensation*? “The *other fountain*,” says Locke, “from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas, is the perception of the operations of our own minds within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got; which operations, when the soul comes to *reflect on* and consider, do furnish the understanding with another set of ideas, which could not be had from things without; and such are *Perception, Thinking, Doubting, Believing, Reasoning, Knowing, Willing*, and all the different actings of our own minds, which, we being conscious of, and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our understandings ideas as distinct as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself: And though it be not sense, *as having nothing to do with external objects*, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called *internal sense*. But as I call the other SENSATION, so I call this REFLECTION; the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by *reflecting on its own operations within itself*.”¹ (Locke’s *Works*, Vol. I. p. 78.)

“The understanding seems to me not to have the least glimmering of any ideas which it doth not receive from one of these two. *External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities; and the mind furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own operations.*” (*Ibid.* p. 79.)

¹ Note (E.)

In another part of the same chapter, Locke expresses himself thus : “ Men come to be furnished with fewer or more simple ideas from without, according as the objects they converse with afford greater or less variety ; and from the operations of their minds within, according as they more or less REFLECT on them. For, though he that contemplates the operations of his mind, cannot but have plain and clear ideas of them ; yet, unless he turn his thoughts that way, and consider them *attentively*, he will no more have clear and distinct ideas of all the operations of his mind, and all that may be observed therein, than he will have all the particular ideas of any landscape, or of the parts and motions of a clock, who will not turn his eyes to it, and with attention heed all the parts of it. The picture, or clock, may be so placed, that they may come in his way every day ; but yet he will have but a confused idea of all the parts they are made up of, till he applies himself with attention, to consider them in each particular.

“ And hence we see the reason why it is pretty late before most children get ideas of the operations of their own minds ; and some have not any very clear or perfect ideas of the greatest part of them all their lives. Children, when they first come into it, are surrounded with a world of new things, which, by a constant solicitation of their senses, draw the mind constantly to them,—forward to take notice of new, and apt to be delighted with the variety of changing objects. Thus, the first years are usually employed and directed in looking abroad. Men’s business in them is to acquaint themselves with what is to be found without ; and so growing up in a constant attention to outward sensations, seldom make any considerable reflection on what passes within them, till they come to be of riper years ; and some scarce ever at all.” (*Ibid.* pp. 80, 81.)

I beg leave to request more particularly the attention of my readers to the following paragraphs :

“ If it be demanded, *when a man begins to have any ideas?* I think the true answer is, when he first has any *sensation*. . . . I conceive that ideas in the understanding are coëval with *sensation*; which is such an impression or motion, made in some part of the body, as produces some perception in the understanding. It is about these impressions made on our senses by outward objects, that the mind seems *first* to employ itself in such operations as we call *Perception, Remembering, Consideration, Reasoning, &c.*

“ In time, the mind comes to reflect on its own operations, and about the ideas got by sensation, and thereby stores itself with a new set of ideas, which I call *ideas of reflection*. These impressions that are made on our senses by objects extrinsical to the mind; and *its own operations, proceeding from powers intrinsical and proper to itself* (which, when reflected on by itself, become also objects of its contemplation), are, as I have said, *the original of all knowledge.*”¹ (*Ibid.* pp. 91, 92.)

¹ The idea attached by Locke in the above passages to the word *Reflection* is clear and precise. But in the course of his subsequent speculations, he does not always rigidly adhere to it, frequently employing it in that more extensive and popular sense in which it denotes the attentive and deliberate consideration of any object of thought, whether relating to the external or to the internal world. It is in this sense he uses it when he refers to Reflection our ideas of Cause and Effect, of Identity and Diversity, and of *all other relations*. “ All of these (he observes) *terminate in, and are concerned about,* those simple ideas, either of Sensation or Reflection, which I think to be the whole materials of all our knowledge.” (Book II. c. xxv. sect. 9.) From this explanation it would appear that Locke conceived it sufficient to justify his account of the origin of our knowledge, if it could be shown that all our ideas *terminate in, and are concerned about,* ideas derived either from Sensation or Reflection, according to which comment it will not be a difficult task to obviate every objection to which his fundamental principle concerning the two sources of our ideas may appear to be liable.

In this lax interpretation of a principle so completely interwoven with the whole of his philosophy, there is undoubtedly a departure from logical accuracy; and the same remark may be

A few other scattered sentences, collected from different parts of Locke's *Essay*, may throw additional light on the point in question.

"I know that people, whose thoughts are immersed in matter, and have so subjected their minds to their senses, that they seldom reflect on anything beyond them, are apt to say, they cannot comprehend a *thinking* thing, which perhaps is true: But I affirm, when they consider it well, they can no more comprehend an *extended* thing.

"If any one say, he knows not what 'tis thinks in him; he means, he knows not what the substance is of that thinking thing: No more, say I, knows he what the substance is of that solid thing. Farther, if he says, he knows not *how* he thinks; I answer, Neither knows he *how* he is extended; *how* the solid parts of body are united, or cohere together to make extension." (Vol. II. p. 22.)

"I think we have as many and as clear ideas belonging to mind, as we have belonging to body, the substance of each

extended to the vague and indefinite use which he occasionally makes of the word *Reflection*; a word which expresses the peculiar and characteristical doctrine, by which his system is distinguished from that of the Gassendists and Hobbists. All this, however, serves only to prove still more clearly, how widely remote his real opinion on this subject was from that commonly ascribed to him by the French and German commentators. For my own part, I do not think (notwithstanding some casual expressions which may seem to favour the contrary supposition) that Locke would have hesitated for a moment to admit, with Cudworth and Price, that the *Understanding* is itself a source of new ideas. That it is by *Reflection* (which, according to his own definition, means merely the exercise of the *Understanding* on the internal phenomena) that we get our ideas of memory, imagination, reasoning, and of all other intellectual powers, Mr. Locke has again and again told us; and from this principle it is so obvious an inference, that all the simple ideas which are necessarily implied in our intellectual operations, are ultimately to be referred to the same source, that we cannot reasonably suppose a philosopher of Locke's sagacity to admit the former proposition, and to withhold his assent to the latter.

being equally unknown to us ; and the idea of thinking in mind as clear as of extension in body ; and the communication of motion by thought which we attribute to mind, is as evident as that by impulse, which we ascribe to body. Constant experience makes us sensible of both of these, though our narrow understandings can comprehend neither.¹

“To conclude ; Sensation convinces us, that there are solid extended substances ; and Reflection, that there are thinking ones : Experience assures us of the existence of such beings ; and that the one hath a power to move body by impulse, the other by thought ; *this* we cannot doubt of. But beyond these ideas, as received from their proper sources, our faculties will not reach. If we would inquire farther into their nature, causes, and manner, we perceive not the nature of Extension clearer than we do of Thinking. If we would explain them any farther, one is as easy as the other ; and there is no more difficulty to conceive *how* a substance we know not should, by *thought*, set body into motion, than how a substance we know not should, by *impulse*, set body into motion.” (*Ibid.* pp. 26, 27.)

The passage in Locke which, on a superficial view, appears the most favourable to the misinterpretation put on his account of the Sources of our Knowledge, by so many of his professed followers, is, in my opinion, the following :

“It may also lead us a little towards the original of all our notions and knowledge, if we remark, how great a dependence our words have on common sensible ideas ; and how those which are made use of to stand for actions and notions quite removed from sense, have their rise from

¹ In transcribing this paragraph, I have taken the liberty to substitute the word *Mind* instead of *Spirit*. The two words were plainly considered by Locke, on the present occasion, as quite synonymous ; and the latter (which *seems* to involve a theory concerning the nature of the thinking principle) is now almost universally rejected by English metaphysicians from their Philosophical Vocabulary.

thence, and from obvious sensible ideas are transferred to more abstruse significations, and made to stand for ideas that come not under the cognizance of our senses; v. g. to *imagine, apprehend, comprehend, adhere, conceive, instil, disgust, disturbance, tranquillity, &c.* are all words taken from the operations of sensible things, and applied to certain modes of thinking. *Spirit*, in its primary signification, is breath; *angel*, a messenger: *and I doubt not, but if we could trace them to their sources, we should find, in all languages, the names which stand for things that fall not under our senses, to have had their first rise from sensible ideas.* By which we may give some kind of guess what kind of notions they were, and whence derived, which filled their minds, who were the first beginners of languages; and how nature, even in the naming of things, unawares suggested to men the originals and principles of all their knowledge.”

So far the words of Locke coincide very nearly, if not exactly, with the doctrines of Hobbes and of Gassendi; and I have not a doubt, that a mistaken interpretation of the clause which I have distinguished by *italics*, furnished the germ of all the mighty *discoveries* contained in the *Επιστημολογία*. If Mr. Tooke, however, had studied with due attention the import of what immediately follows, he must have instantly perceived how essentially different Locke’s real opinion on the subject was from what he conceived it to be.—“Whilst to give names, that might make known to others any operations they felt in themselves, or any other ideas that came not under their senses, they were fain to borrow words from ordinary known ideas of sensation, by that means to make others the more easily to conceive those operations they experienced in themselves, which made no outward sensible appearances; and then, when they had got known and agreed names, to signify those internal operations of their own minds, they were sufficiently furnished to make known by words all their other ideas; since they could consist of

nothing but either of outward sensible perceptions, or of the inward operations of their minds about them.”—(Vol. II. pp. 147, 148.)

From the sentences last quoted it is manifest, that when Locke remarked the *material* etymology of all our language about mind, he had not the most distant intention to draw from it any inference which might tend to identify the sensible images which this language presents to the fancy, with the metaphysical notions which it figuratively expresses. Through the whole of his *Essay*, he uniformly represents *sensation* and *reflection* as radically distinct sources of knowledge; and, of consequence, he must have conceived it to be not less unphilosophical to attempt an explanation of the phenomena of mind by the analogy of matter, than to think of explaining the phenomena of matter by the analogy of mind. To this fundamental principle concerning the origin of our ideas, he has added, in the passage now before us, That, as our knowledge of mind is posterior in the order of time to that of matter (the first years of our existence being necessarily occupied about objects of sense), it is not surprising, that “when men wished to give names that might make known to others any operations they felt in themselves, or any other ideas that came not under their senses, they should have been fain to borrow words from ordinary known ideas of sensation, by that means to make others the more easily to conceive those operations which make no outward sensible appearances.” According to this statement, the purpose of these “borrowed” or metaphorical words is not (as Mr. Tooke concluded) to *explain* the nature of the operations, but to direct the attention of the hearer to that internal world, the phenomena of which he can only learn to comprehend by the exercise of his own power of reflection. If Locke has nowhere affirmed so explicitly as his predecessor Descartes, that “nothing conceivable by the power of imagination can throw any light on the operations of thought,”

it may be presumed that he considered this as unnecessary, after having dwelt so much on *reflection* as the exclusive source of all our ideas relating to mind; and on the peculiar difficulties attending the exercise of this power, in consequence of the effect of early associations in confounding together our notions of mind and of matter.

The misapprehensions so prevalent on the Continent, with respect to Locke's doctrine on this most important of all metaphysical questions, began during his own lifetime; and were countenanced by the authority of no less a writer than Leibnitz, who always represents Locke as a partizan of the scholastic maxim, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*.—"Nempe (says Leibnitz in reply to this maxim) *nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi ipse intellectus*."¹ The remark is excellent, and does ho-

¹ *Opera*, Tom. V. pp. 358, 359.

That the same mistake still keeps its ground among many foreign writers of the highest class, the following passage affords a sufficient proof: "Leibnitz a combattu avec une force de dialectique admirable le Systême de Locke, qui attribûe toutes nos idées à nos sensations. On avoit mis en avant cet axiome si connu qu'il n'y avoit rien dans l'intelligence qui n'eût été d'abord dans les sensations, et Leibnitz y ajouta cette sublime restriction, *si ce n'est l'intelligence elle-meme*. De ce principe dérive toute la philosophie nouvelle qui exerce tant d'influence sur les esprits en Allemagne." (*Mad. de Stael de l'Allemagne*, Tom. III. p. 65.)

I observed in the First Part of this Dissertation (page 107), that this *sublime restriction* on which so much stress has been laid by the partizans of the German school, is little more than a translation of the following words of Aristotle: *Και αυτος δε νους νοητος εστιν, ωσπερ τα νοητα επι μεν γαρ των ανευ υλης, το αυτο εστι το νοουν και το νοουμενον*. (*De Anima*, Lib. III. cap. v.)

As to Locke, the same injustice which he received from Leibnitz was very early done to him in his own country. In a tract printed in 1697, by a mathematician of some note, the author of the *Essay on Human Understanding* is represented as holding the same opinion with Gassendi concerning the origin of our ideas. "*Ideæ nomine communi sensu utor; earum originem an a sensibus solum, ut Gassendo et Lockio nostrati, cæterisque plurimis visum est, an aliundè, hujus loci non est in-*

nour to the acuteness of the critic ; but it is not easy to conceive on what grounds it should have been urged as an ob-

quirere." (*De Spatio Reali, seu Ente Infinito Conamen Mathematico-Metaphysicum.* Auctore Josepho Raphson, Reg. Soc. Socio. This tract is annexed to the second edition of a work entitled *Analysis Aequationum Universalis.* Lond. 1702.)

In order to enable my readers more easily to form a judgment on the argument in the text, I must beg leave once more to remind them of the distinction already pointed out between the Gassendists and the Cartesians ; the former asserting, that, as all our ideas are derived from the external senses, the intellectual phenomena can admit of no other explanation than what is furnished by analogies drawn from the material world ; the latter rejecting these analogies altogether, as delusive and treacherous lights in the study of mind ; and contending, that the exercise of the power of reflection is the only medium through which any knowledge of its operations is to be obtained. To the one or the other of these two classes, all the metaphysicians of the last century may be referred ; and even at the present day, the fundamental question which formed the chief ground of controversy between Gassendi and Descartes (I mean the question concerning the proper logical method of studying the mind) still continues the hinge on which the most important disputes relating to the internal world will be found ultimately to turn.

According to this distinction, Locke (notwithstanding some occasional slips of his pen) belongs indisputably to the class of Cartesians ; as well as the very small number of his followers who have entered thoroughly into the spirit of his philosophy. To the class of Gassendists, on the other hand, belong all those French metaphysicians, who, professing to tread in Locke's footsteps, have derived all their knowledge of the *Essay on Human Understanding* from the works of Condillac ; together with most of the commentators on Locke who have proceeded from the school of Bishop Law. To these may be added (among the writers of later times) Priestley, Darwin, Beddoes, and, above all, Horne Tooke, with his numerous disciples.

The doctrine of Hobbes on this cardinal question coincided entirely with that of Gassendi, and, accordingly, it is not unusual in the present times, among Hobbes's disciples, to ascribe to him the whole merit of that account of the origin of our knowledge, which, from a strange misconception, has been supposed to have been claimed by Locke as his own discovery. But where, it may be asked, has Hobbes said anything about

jection to a writer, who has insisted so explicitly and so frequently on *reflection* as the source of a class of ideas essen-

the origin of those ideas which Locke refers to the power of *reflection*? and may not the numerous observations which Locke has made on *this* power as a source of ideas peculiar to itself, be regarded as an indirect refutation of that theory which would resolve all the objects of our knowledge into *sensations*, as their ultimate elements? This was not merely a step *beyond* Hobbes; but the correction of an error which lies at the very root of Hobbes's system;—an error, under which (it may be added) the greater part of Hobbes's eulogists have the misfortune still to labour.

It is with much regret I add, that a very large proportion of the English writers, who call themselves *Lockists*, and who, I have no doubt, believe themselves to be so in reality, are at bottom (at least in their metaphysical opinions) *Gassendists* or *Hobbi- bists*. In what respect do the following observations differ from the Epicurean theory concerning the origin of our knowledge, as expounded by Gassendi? “The ideas conveyed by sight, and by our other senses, having entered the mind, intermingle, unite, separate, throw themselves into various combinations and postures, and thereby generate new ideas of reflection, strictly so called; such as those of comparing, dividing, distinguishing,—of abstraction, relation, with many others; all which remain with us as stock for our further use on future occasions.” I do not recollect any passage, either in Helvetius or Diderot, which contains a more explicit and decided avowal of that Epicurean system of Metaphysics, which it was the great aim both of Descartes and of Locke to overthrow.

In the following conjectures concerning the *nature* of our ideas, the same author has far exceeded in extravagance any of the Metaphysicians of the French school. “What those *substances* are, whereof our ideas are the modifications, *whether parts of the mind as the members are of our body, or contained in it like wafers in a box, or enveloped by it like fish in water, whether of a spiritual, corporeal, or middle nature between both*, I need not now ascertain. All I mean to lay down at present is this, that, in every exercise of the understanding, that which discerns is *numerically and substantially distinct* from that which is discerned; and that an act of the understanding is not so much our own proper act, as the act of something else operating upon us.”

I should scarcely have thought it worth while to take notice of these passages, had not the doctrines contained in the work from which they are taken, been sanctioned in the most unqua-

tially different from those which are derived from *sensation*. To myself it appears, that the words of Leibnitz only convey, in a more concise and epigrammatic form, the substance of Locke's doctrine. Is any thing implied in them which Locke has not more fully and clearly stated in the following sentence? "External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities; and the mind furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own operations." (Locke's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 79.)

The extraordinary zeal displayed by Locke, at the very outset of his work, against the hypothesis of *innate ideas*, goes far to account for the mistakes committed by his commentators, in interpreting his account of the origin of our

lified terms by the high authority of Dr. Paley. "There is one work (he observes) to which I owe so much, that it would be ungrateful not to confess the obligation: I mean the writings of the late Abraham Tucker, Esq. part of which were published by himself, and the remainder since his death, under the title of the *Light of Nature Pursued*, by Edward Search, Esq." "I have found, in this writer, more original thinking and observation upon the several subjects that he has taken in hand, than in any other, not to say than in all others put together. His talent also for illustration is unrivalled. But his thoughts are diffused through a long, various, and irregular work. I shall account it no mean praise, if I have been sometimes able to dispose into method, to collect into heads and articles, or to exhibit in more compact and tangible masses, what, in that excellent performance, is spread over too much surface." (*Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, Preface, pp. 25, 26.)

Of an author whom Dr. Paley has honoured with so very warm an eulogy, it would be equally absurd and presumptuous to dispute the merits. Nor have I any wish to detract from the praise here bestowed on him as an original thinker and observer. I readily admit, also, his talent for illustration, although it sometimes leads him to soar into bombast, and more frequently to sink into buffoonery. As an honest inquirer after moral and religious truth, he is entitled to the most unqualified approbation. But, I must be permitted to add, that, as a metaphysician, he seems to me much more fanciful than solid; and, at the same time, to be so rambling, verbose, and excursive, as to be more likely to unsettle than to fix the principles of his readers.

knowledge. It ought, however, to be always kept in view, in reading his argument on the subject, that it is the *Cartesian* theory of innate ideas which he is here combating; according to which theory (as understood by Locke), an *innate idea* signifies *something* coëval in its existence with the mind to which it belongs, and illuminating the understanding before the external senses begin to operate. The very close affinity between this theory, and some of the doctrines of the Platonic school, prevented Leibnitz, it is probable, from judging of Locke's argument against it, with his usual candour; and disposed him hastily to conclude, that the opposition of Locke to Descartes proceeded from views essentially the same with those of Gassendi, and of his other Epicurean antagonists. How very widely he was mistaken in this conclusion, the numerous passages which I have quoted in Locke's own words sufficiently demonstrate.

In what respects Locke's account of the origin of our ideas *falls short* of the truth, will appear, when the metaphysical discussions of later times come under our review. Enough has been already said to show, how completely this account has been misapprehended, not only by his opponents, but by the most devoted of his admirers;—a misapprehension so very general, and, at the same time, so obviously at variance with the whole spirit of his Essay, as to prove to a demonstration that, in point of numbers, the *intelligent readers* of this celebrated work have hitherto borne but a small proportion to its purchasers and panegyrists. What an illustration of the folly of trusting, in matters of literary history, to the traditionary judgments copied by one commentator or critic from another, when recourse may so easily be had to the original sources of information !¹

¹ In justice to Dr. Hartley, I must here observe, that, although his account of the origin of our ideas is precisely the same with that of Gassendi, Hobbes, and Condillac (one of his fundamental principles being, that the *ideas* of sensation are the

II. Another misapprehension, not less prevalent than the former, with respect to Locke's philosophical creed, relates

elements of which all the rest are compounded),* he has not availed himself, like the other Gassendists of later times, of the name of Locke to recommend this theory to the favour of his readers. On the contrary, he has very clearly and candidly pointed out the wide and essential distinction between the two opinions. "It may not be amiss here to take notice how far the theory of these papers has led me to differ, in respect of logic, from Mr. Locke's excellent *Essay on the Human Understanding*, to which the world is so much indebted for removing prejudices and encumbrances, and advancing real and useful knowledge.

"First, then, it appears to me, that all the most complex ideas arise from sensation, and that *reflection is not a distinct source*, as Mr. Locke makes it."†

This last proposition Hartley seems to have considered as an important and original improvement of his own on Locke's logic; whereas, in fact, it is only a relapse into the old Epicurean hypothesis, which it was one of the main objects of Locke's *Essay* to explode.

I would not have enlarged so fully on Locke's account of the origin of our ideas, had not a mistaken view of his argument on this head, served as a ground-work for the whole *Metaphysical Philosophy* of the French *Encyclopédie*. That all our knowledge is derived from our external senses, is every where assumed by the conductors of that work as a demonstrated principle; and the credit of this demonstration is uniformly ascribed to Locke, who, we are told, was the first that fully unfolded and established a truth, of which his predecessors had only an imperfect glimpse. La Harpe, in his *Lycée*, has, on this account, justly censured the metaphysical phraseology of the *Encyclopédie*, as tending to degrade the intellectual nature of man; while, with a strange inconsistency, he bestows the most unqualified praise on the writings of Condillac. Little did he suspect, when he wrote the following sentences, how much the reasonings of his favourite logician had contributed to pave the way for those conclusions which he reprobates with so much asperity in Diderot and D'Alembert.

"La gloire de Condillac est d'avoir été le premier disciple de Locke; mais si Condillac eut un maître, il mérita d'en servir à

* Hartley on *Man*, 4th Ed. p. 2 of the Introduction.

† Hartley on *Man*, 4th Ed. p. 360 of the Introduction.

to the power of moral perception, and the immutability of moral distinctions. The consideration of such questions, it

tous les autres ; il repandit même une plus grande lumière sur les découvertes du philosophe Anglois ; il les rendit pour ainsi dire sensibles, et c'est grâce à lui qu'elles sont devenues communes et familières. En un mot, la saine Métaphysique ne date en France, que des ouvrages de Condillac, et à ce titre il doit être compté dans le petit nombre d'hommes qui ont avancé la science qu'ils ont cultivée."—(*Lycée*, Tome XV. pp. 136, 137.)

La Harpe proceeds in the same panegyrical strain through more than seventy pages, and concludes his eulogy of Condillac with these words : "Le style de Condillac est clair et pur comme ses conceptions ; c'est en general l'esprit le plus juste et le plus lumineux qui ait contribué, dans ce siècle, aux progrès de la bonne philosophie."—(*Ibid.* p. 214.)

La Harpe's account of the power of *Reflection* will form an appropriate supplement to his comments on Condillac. "L'impression sentie des objets se nomme *perception* ; l'action de l'âme qui les considère, se nomme *reflexion*. Ce mot, il est vrai, exprime un mouvement physique, celui de se replier sur soi-même ou sur quelque chose ; mais toutes nos idées venant des sens, nous sommes souvent obligés de nous servir de termes physiques pour exprimer les opérations de l'âme."—(*Ibid.* p. 153.) In another passage he defines *Reflection* as follows : "La faculté de reflexion, c'est-à-dire, le pouvoir qu'a notre âme, de comparer, d'assembler, de combiner les perceptions."—(*Ibid.* p. 183.) How widely do these definitions of *reflection* differ from that given by Locke ; and how exactly do they accord with the Philosophy of Gassendi, of Hobbes, and of Diderot !

In a lately published sketch *Of the State of French Literature during the eighteenth century* (a work, to which the Author's taste and powers as a writer have attracted a degree of public attention something beyond what was due to his philosophical depth and discernment), there are some shrewd, and, in my opinion, sound remarks, on the *moral* tendency of that metaphysical system to which Condillac gave so much circulation and celebrity. I shall quote some of his strictures which bear more particularly on the foregoing argument.

"Autrefois, négligeant d'examiner tout ce mécanisme des sens, tous ces rapports directs du corps avec les objets, les philosophes ne s'occupaient que de ce qui se passe au-dedans de l'homme. La science de l'âme, telle a été la noble étude de Descartes, de Pascal, de Malebranche, de Leibnitz. (Why omit in this list the name of Locke ?) Peut-être se perdoient-ils quelquefois dans les nuages des hautes régions où ils avoient

may at first sight be thought, belongs rather to the history of Ethics than of Metaphysics; but it must be recollected, that, in introducing them here, I follow the example of Locke himself, who has enlarged upon them at considerable length, in his Argument against the Theory of *Innate Ideas*. An *Ethical* disquisition of this sort formed, it must be owned, an awkward introduction to a work on the Human Understanding; but the conclusion on which it is meant to bear is purely of a *Metaphysical* nature; and, when combined with the premises from which it is deduced, affords a good illustration of the impossibility, in tracing the progress of these two scien-

pris leur vol; peut-être leurs travaux étoient-ils sans application directe; mais du moins ils suivoient une direction élevée, leur doctrine étoit en rapport avec les pensées qui nous agitent quand nous réfléchissons profondément sur nous-mêmes. Cette route conduisoit nécessairement au plus nobles des sciences, à la religion, et à la morale. Elle supposoit dans ceux qui la cultivoient un génie élevé et de vastes méditations.

“ On se lassa de les suivre; on traita de vaines subtilités, on flétrit du titre de rêveries scholastiques les travaux de ces grandes esprits. On se jeta dans la science des sensations, espérant qu’elle seroit plus à la portée de l’intelligence humaine. On s’occupa de plus en plus des rapports mécaniques de l’homme avec les objets, et de l’influence de son organisation physique. De cette sorte, la métaphysique alla toujours se rabaissant, au point que maintenant, pour quelques personnes, elle se confond presque avec la physiologie. . . . Le dix huitième siècle a voulu faire de cette manière d’envisager l’homme un de ses principaux titres de gloire. . . .

“ Condillac est le chef de cette école. C’est dans ses ouvrages que cette métaphysique exerce toutes les séductions de la méthode, et de la lucidité; d’autant plus claire, qu’elle est moins profonde. Peu d’écrivains ont obtenu plus de succès. Il réduisit à la portée du vulgaire la science de la pensée, en retranchant tout ce qu’elle avoit d’élévée. Chacun fut surpris et glorieux de pouvoir philosopher si facilement; et l’on eut une grande reconnaissance pour celui à qui l’on devoit ce bienfait. On ne s’aperçut pas qu’il avoit rabaissé la science, au lieu de rendre ses disciples capable d’y atteindre.”—(*Tableau de la Littérature Française pendant le dix-huitième Siècle*, pp. 87, 88, 89. 92.)

ces, of separating completely the history of the one from that of the other.

In what sense Locke's reasonings against *Innate Ideas* have been commonly understood, may be collected from the following passage of an author, who had certainly no wish to do injustice to Locke's opinions.

"The First Book (says Dr. Beattie) of the *Essay on Human Understanding*, which, with submission, I think the worst, tends to establish this dangerous doctrine, that the human mind, previous to education and habit, is as susceptible of any one impression as of any other :—a doctrine which, if true, would go near to prove, that truth and virtue are no better than human contrivances ; or, at least, that they have nothing permanent in their nature ; but may be as changeable as the inclinations and capacities of men." Dr. Beattie, however, candidly and judiciously adds, "Surely this is not the doctrine that Locke *meant* to establish ; but his zeal against innate ideas, and innate principles, put him off his guard, and made him allow too little to instinct, for fear of allowing too much."

In this last remark, I perfectly agree with Dr. Beattie ; although I am well aware, that a considerable number of Locke's English disciples have not only chosen to interpret the first book of his *Essay* in that very sense in which it appeared to Dr. Beattie to be of so mischievous a tendency, but have avowed Locke's doctrine, when thus interpreted, as their own ethical creed. In this number, I am sorry to say, the respectable name of Paley must be included.¹

It is fortunate for Locke's reputation, that, in other parts of his *Essay*, he has disavowed, in the most unequivocal terms, those dangerous conclusions which, it must be owned, the general strain of his first book has too much the appear-

¹ See *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, Book I. Chap. 5, where the author discusses the question concerning a *Moral sense*.

ance of favouring. “He that hath the idea (he observes on one occasion) of an intelligent, but frail and weak being, made by and depending on another, who is omnipotent, perfectly wise, and good, will as certainly know, that man is to honour, fear, and obey God, as that the sun shines when he sees it; nor can he be surer, in a clear morning, that the sun is risen, if he will but open his eyes, and turn them that way. But yet these truths being never so certain, never so clear, he may be ignorant of either, or all of them, who will never take the pains to employ his faculties as he should to inform himself about them.” To the same purpose, he has elsewhere said, that “there is a *Law of Nature*, as intelligible to a *rational creature and studier of that law*, as the positive laws of commonwealths.” Nay, he has himself, in the most explicit terms, anticipated and disclaimed those dangerous consequences which, it has been so often supposed, it was the chief scope of this introductory chapter to establish. “I would not be mistaken, as if, because I deny an innate law, I thought there were none but positive laws. There is a great deal of difference between an innate law and a law of nature; between something imprinted on our minds in their very original, and something that we, being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties. And I think they equally forsake the truth, who, running into the contrary extremes, either affirm an innate law, or deny that there is a law knowable by the light of nature, without the help of a positive revelation.” (Vol. 1. p. 44.) Nor was Locke unaware of the influence on men’s lives of their speculative tenets concerning these metaphysical and ethical questions. On this point, which can alone render such discussions interesting to human happiness, he has expressed himself thus: “Let that principle of some of the philosophers, that *all is matter, and that there is nothing else*, be received for certain and indubitable, and it will be easy to be seen, by the writings of some that

have revived it again in our days, what consequences it will lead into....Nothing can be so dangerous as principles thus taken up without due questioning or examination ; especially if they be such as influence men's lives, and give a bias to all their actions. He that with *Archelaus* shall lay it down as a principle, that right and wrong, honest and dishonest, are defined only by laws, and not by nature, will have other measures of moral rectitude and pravity, than those who take it for granted, that we are under obligations antecedent to all human constitutions." (Vol. III. p. 75.) Is not the whole of this passage evidently pointed at the Epicurean maxims of Hobbes and of Gassendi ?¹

Lord Shaftesbury was one of the first who sounded the alarm against what he conceived to be the drift of that philosophy which denies the existence of *innate principles*. Various strictures on this subject occur in the *Characteristics* ; particularly in the treatise entitled *Advice to an Author* ; but the most direct of all his attacks upon Locke is to be found in his 8th Letter, addressed to a Student at the University. In this letter he observes, that "all those called *free writers* now-a-days have espoused those principles which Mr. Hobbes set a foot in this last age."—"Mr. Locke (he continues), as much as I honour him on account of other writings (on Government, Policy, Trade, Coin, Education, Toleration, &c.), and as well as I knew him, and can answer for

¹ To the above quotations from Locke, the following deserves to be added : "Whilst the parties of men cram their tenets down all men's throats, whom they can get into their power, without permitting them to examine their truth or falsehood, and will not let truth have fair play in the world, nor men the liberty to search after it ; what improvements can be expected of this kind ? What greater light can be hoped for in the moral sciences ? The subject part of mankind in most places might, instead thereof, with Egyptian bondage expect Egyptian darkness, were not the candle of the Lord set up by himself in men's minds, which it is impossible for the breath or power of man wholly to extinguish." Vol. II. pp. 343, 344.

his sincerity as a most zealous Christian and believer, did however go in the self-same tract ; and is followed by the Tindals, and all the other free authors of our times !

“ ’Twas Mr. Locke that struck the home blow : for Mr. Hobbes’s character, and base slavish principles of government, took off the poison of his philosophy. ’Twas Mr. Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all *order and virtue* out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same with those of God) *unnatural*, and without foundation in our minds. *Innate* is a word he poorly plays upon : the right word, though less used, is *connatural*. For what has *birth* or progress of the fœtus out of the womb to do in this case ?—the question is not about the *time* the ideas entered, or the moment that one body came out of the other ; but whether the constitution of man be such, that, being adult and grown up,¹ at such a time, sooner or later (no matter when), the idea and sense of *order, administration*, and a God, will not infallibly, inevitably, necessarily spring up in him.”

In this last remark Shaftesbury appears to me to place the question about *innate ideas* upon the right and only philosophical footing ; and to afford a key to all the confusion running through Locke’s argument against their existence. The sequel of the above quotation is not less just and valuable—but I must not indulge myself in any farther extracts. It is sufficient to mention the perfect coincidence between the opinion of Shaftesbury, as here stated by himself, and that formerly quoted in the words of Locke ; and, of consequence, the injustice of concluding, from some unguarded expressions of the latter, that there was, at bottom, any essential difference between their real sentiments.²

¹ Lord Shaftesbury should have said, “grown up to the possession and exercise of his reasoning powers.”

² I must, at the same time, again repeat, that the facts and reasonings contained in the introduction to Locke’s *Essay* go very far to account for the severity of Shaftesbury’s censures on this part of his work. Sir Isaac Newton himself, an intimate friend

Under the title of Locke's *Metaphysical* (or, to speak with more strict precision, his *Logical*) writings, may also be

of Locke's appears, from a letter of his which I have read in his own hand-writing, to have felt precisely in the same manner with the author of the *Characteristics*. Such, at least, were his *first* impressions; although he afterwards requested, with a humility and candour worthy of himself, the forgiveness of Locke for this injustice done to his character. "I beg your pardon (says he) for representing that you struck at the root of morality in a principle you laid down in your book of ideas, and designed to pursue in another book; and that I took you for a Hob. bist." In the same letter Newton alludes to certain unfounded suspicions which he had been led to entertain of the propriety of Locke's conduct in some of their private concerns; adding, with an ingenuous and almost infantine simplicity, "I was so much affected with this, that when one told me you was sickly and would not live, I answered, 'twere better if you were dead. I desire you to forgive me this uncharitableness." The letter is subscribed, *your most humble and most unfortunate servant, Is. Newton.**

The rough draught of Mr. Locke's reply to these afflicting acknowledgments, was kindly communicated to me by a friend some years ago. It is written with the magnanimity of a philosopher, and with the good-humoured forbearance of a man of the world; and it breathes throughout so tender and so unaffected a veneration for the good as well as great qualities of the excellent person to whom it is addressed, as demonstrates at once the conscious integrity of the writer, and the superiority of his mind to the irritation of little passions. I know of nothing from Locke's pen which does more honour to his temper and character; and I introduce it with peculiar satisfaction, in connection with those strictures, which truth has extorted from me on that part of his system which to the moralist stands most in need of explanation and apology.

MR. LOCKE TO MR. NEWTON.

"SIR,

Oates, 5th October, 93.

"I have been ever since I first knew you so kindly and sincerely your friend, and thought you so much mine, that I could not have believed what you tell me of yourself, had I had it from any body else. And though I cannot but be mightily troubled that you should have had so many wrong and unjust thoughts of me, yet, next to the return of good offices, such as from a

* It is dated *at the Bull in Shoreditch, London, September 1693*; and is addressed, *For John Locke, Esq. at Sir Fra. Masham's, Bart. at Oates, in Essex.*

classed his tracts on Education, and on the Conduct of the Understanding. These tracts are entirely of a practical nature, and were plainly intended for a wider circle of readers than his *Essay*; but they everywhere bear the strongest marks of the same zeal for extending the empire of Truth and of Reason, and may be justly regarded as parts of the same great design¹. It has been often remark-

sincere good will I have ever done you, I receive your acknowledgment of the contrary as the kindest thing you could have done me, since it gives me hopes I have not lost a friend I so much valued. After what your letter expresses, I shall not need to say any thing to justify myself to you: I shall always think your own reflection on my carriage both to you and all mankind will sufficiently do that. Instead of that, give me leave to assure you, that I am more ready to forgive you than you can be to desire it; and I do it so freely and fully, that I wish for nothing more than the opportunity to convince you that I truly love and esteem you; and that I have still the same good will for you as if nothing of this had happened. To confirm this to you more fully, I should be glad to meet you anywhere, and the rather, because the conclusion of your letter makes me apprehend it would not be wholly useless to you. I shall always be ready to serve you to my utmost, in any way you shall like, and shall only need your commands or permission to do it.

“My book is going to press for a second edition; and, though I can answer for the design with which I writ it, yet, since you have so opportunely given me notice of what you have said of it, I should take it as a favour if you would point out to me the places that gave occasion to that censure, that, by explaining myself better, I may avoid being mistaken by others, or unwillingly doing the least prejudice to truth or virtue. I am sure you are so much a friend to both, that, were you none to me, I could expect this from you. But I cannot doubt but you would do a great deal more than this for my sake, who, after all, have all the concern of a friend for you, wish you extremely well, and am, without compliment,” &c. &c.

(For the preservation of this precious memorial of Mr. Locke, the public is indebted to the descendants of his friend and relation the Lord Chancellor King, to whom his papers and library were bequeathed. The original is still in the possession of the present representative of that noble family; for whose flattering permission to enrich my Dissertation with the above extracts, I feel the more grateful, as I have not the honour of being personally known to his Lordship.)

¹ Mr. Locke, it would appear, had once intended to publish

ed, that they display less originality than might have been expected from so bold and powerful a thinker; and, accordingly, both of them have long fallen into very general neglect. It ought, however, to be remembered, that, on the most important points discussed in them, new suggestions are not now to be looked for; and that the great object of the reader should be, not to learn something which he never heard of before, but to learn, among the multiplicity of discordant precepts current in the world, *which* of them were sanctioned, and *which* reprobated by the judgment of Locke. The candid and unreserved thoughts of such a writer upon such subjects as Education, and the culture of the intellectual powers, possess an intrinsic value, which is not diminished by the consideration of their triteness. They not only serve to illustrate the peculiarities of the author's own character and views, but, considered in a practical light, come recommended to us by all the additional weight of his discriminating experience. In this point of view, the two tracts in question, but more especially that on the *Conduct of the Understanding*, will always continue to be interesting manuals to such as are qualified to appreciate the mind from which they proceeded.¹

his thoughts on the *Conduct of the Understanding*, as an additional chapter to his *Essay*. "I have lately," says he, in a letter to Mr. Molyneux, "got a little leisure to think of some additions to my book against the next edition, and within these few days have fallen upon a subject that I know not how far it will lead me. I have written several pages on it, but the matter, the farther I go, opens the more upon me, and I cannot get sight of any end of it. The title of the chapter will be, *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, which, if I shall pursue as far as I imagine it will reach, and as it deserves, will, I conclude, make the largest chapter of my *Essay*." (Locke's *Works*, Vol. IX. p. 407.)

¹ A similar remark may be extended to a letter from Locke to his friend Mr. Samuel Bold, who had complained to him of the disadvantages he laboured under from a weakness of memory. It contains nothing but what might have come from the

It must not, however, be concluded from the *apparent* triteness of some of Locke's remarks, to the present generation of readers, that they were viewed in the same light by his own contemporaries. On the contrary, Leibnitz speaks of the *Treatise on Education* as a work of still greater merit than the *Essay on Human Understanding*.¹ Nor will this judgment be wondered at by those who, abstracted from the habits of thinking in which they have been reared, transport themselves in imagination to the state of Europe a hundred years ago. How flat and nugatory seem now the cautions to parents, about watching over those associations, on which the dread of spirits in the dark is founded ! But how different was the case (even in Protestant countries) till a very recent period of the last century !

I have, on a former occasion, taken notice of the slow but (since the invention of printing) certain steps by which Truth makes its way in the world ; “ the discoveries, which, in one age, are confined to the studious and enlightened few, becoming, in the next, the established creed of the learned ; and, in the third, forming part of the elementary principles of education.” The harmony, in the meantime, which exists among truths of all descriptions, tends

pen of one of Newberry's authors ; but with what additional interest do we read it, when considered as a comment by Locke on a suggestion of Bacon's ! (Locke's *Works*, Vol. X. p. 317.)

It is a judicious reflection of Shenstone's, that “ every single observation published by a man of genius, be it ever so trivial, should be esteemed of importance, because he speaks from his own impressions ; whereas common men publish common things, which they have perhaps *gleaned* from frivolous writers.” I know of few authors to whom this observation applies more forcibly and happily than to Locke, when he touches on the culture of the intellectual powers. His precepts, indeed, are not all equally sound ; but they, in general, contain a large proportion of truth, and may always furnish to a speculative mind matter of useful meditation.

¹ Leib. *Op.* Tom. VI. p. 226.

perpetually, by blending them into one common mass, to increase the joint influence of the whole ; the contributions of individuals to this mass (to borrow the fine allusion of Middleton) “resembling the drops of rain, which, falling separately into the water, mingle at once with the stream, and strengthen the general current.” Hence the ambition, so natural to weak minds, to distinguish themselves by paradoxical and extravagant opinions ; for *these*, having no chance to incorporate themselves with the progressive reason of the species, are the more likely to immortalize the eccentricity of their authors, and to furnish subjects of wonder to the common compilers of literary history. This ambition is the more general, as so little expence of genius is necessary for its gratification. “Truth (as Mr. Hume has well observed) is *one thing*, but errors are numberless ;” and hence (he might have added) the difficulty of seizing the former, and the facility of swelling the number of the latter.¹

Having said so much in illustration of Locke’s philosophical merits, and in reply to the common charge against his metaphysical and ethical principles, it now only remains for me to take notice of one or two defects in his

¹ Descartes has struck into nearly the same train of thinking with the above, but his remarks apply much better to the writings of Locke than to his own.

“L’expérience m’apprit, que quoique mes opinions surprennent d’abord, parce qu’elles sont fort différentes des vulgaires, cependant, après qu’on les a comprises on les trouve si simples et si conformes au sens commun. qu’on cesse entièrement de les admirer, et par la même d’en faire cas : parceque tel est le naturel des hommes qu’ils n’estiment que les choses qui leur laissent d’admiration et qu’ils ne possèdent pas tout-a-fait. C’est ainsi que quoique la santé soit le plus grand de tous les biens qui concernent le corps, c’est pourtant celui auquel nous faisons le moins de réflexion, et que nous goutons le moins. Or la connoissance de la vérité est comme la santé de l’ame ; lorsque on la possède on n’y pense plus.” (*Lettres*, Tome I. Lettre xliii.)

intellectual character, which exhibit a strong contrast to the general vigour of his mental powers.

Among these defects, the most prominent is, the facility with which he listens to historical evidence, when it happens to favour his own conclusions. Many remarkable instances of this occur in his long and rambling argument (somewhat in the style of Montaigne) against the existence of *innate practical principles*; to which may be added, the degree of credit he appears to have given to the popular tales about mermaids, and to Sir William Temple's idle story of Prince Maurice's "rational and intelligent parrot." Strange! that the same person who, in matters of reasoning, had divested himself, almost to a fault, of all reverence for the opinions of others, should have failed to perceive, that, of all the various sources of error, one of the most copious and fatal is an unreflecting faith in human testimony!

The disrespect of Locke for the wisdom of antiquity, is another prejudice which has frequently given a wrong bias to his judgment. The idolatry in which the Greek and Roman writers were held by his immediate predecessors, although it may help to account for this weakness, cannot altogether excuse it in a man of so strong and enlarged an understanding. Locke (as we are told by Dr. Warton) *affected* to depreciate the ancients; which circumstance (he adds), as I am informed from undoubted authority, was the source of perpetual discontent and dispute betwixt him and his pupil, Lord Shaftesbury; who, in many parts of the *Characteristics*, has ridiculed Locke's philosophy, and endeavoured to represent him as a disciple of Hobbes." To those who are aware of the direct opposition between the principles of Hobbes, of Montaigne, of Gassendi, and of the other *minute philosophers* with whom Locke sometimes seems unconsciously to unite his strength,—and the principles of Socrates, of Plato, of Cicero, and of all the soundest mo-

ralists, both of ancient and of modern times, the foregoing anecdote will serve at once to explain and to palliate the acrimony of some of Shaftesbury's strictures on Locke's Ethical paradoxes.¹

With this disposition of Locke to depreciate the ancients, was intimately connected that contempt which he everywhere expresses for the study of Eloquence, and that perversion of taste which led him to consider Blackmore as one of the first of our English poets.² That his own imagination was neither sterile nor torpid, appears sufficiently from the agreeable colouring and animation which it has not unfrequently imparted to his style : but *this* power of the mind he seems to have regarded with a peculiarly jealous and unfriendly eye ; confining his view exclusively to its occasional effects in misleading the judgment, and overlooking altogether the important purposes to which it is subservient, both in our intellectual and moral frame. Hence, in all his writings, an inattention to those more attractive aspects of the mind, the study of which (as Burke has well observed), "while it communicates to the taste a sort of philosophical solidity, may be expected to reflect back on the severer sciences some of those graces and elegancies, without which the greatest proficiency in these sciences will always have the appearance of something illiberal."

To a certain hardness of character, not unfrequently united with an insensibility to the charms of poetry and of eloquence, may partly be ascribed the severe and forbidding spirit which has suggested some of the maxims in his *Tract on*

¹ Plebei Philosophi (says Cicero) qui a Platone et Socrate, et ab ea familia dissident.

² "All our English poets, except Milton," says Molyneux in a letter to Locke, "have been mere ballad-makers in comparison to Sir Richard Blackmore." In reply to which Locke says, "There is, I with pleasure find, a strange harmony throughout between your thoughts and mine." (Locke's *Works*, Vol. IX. pp. 423. 426.)

*Education.*¹ He had been treated, himself, it would appear, with very little indulgence by his parents ; and probably was led by that filial veneration which he always expressed for their memory, to ascribe to the early habits of self-denial imposed on him by their ascetic system of ethics, the existence of those moral qualities which he owed to the regulating influence of his own reason in fostering his natural dispositions ; and which, under a gentler and more skilful culture, might have assumed a still more engaging and amiable form. His father, who had served in the Parliament's army, seems to have retained through life that austerity of manners which characterized his puritanical associates ; and, notwithstanding the comparative enlargement and cultivation of Mr. Locke's mind, something of this hereditary leaven, if I am not mistaken, continued to operate upon many of his opinions and habits of thinking. If, in the *Conduct of the Understanding*, he trusted (as many have thought) too much to nature, and laid too little stress on logical rules, he certainly fell into the opposite extreme in every thing connected with the culture of the heart ; distrusting nature altogether, and placing his sole confidence in the effects of a systematical and vigilant discipline. That the great object of education is not to thwart and disturb, but to study the aim, and to facilitate the accomplishment of her beneficial arrangements, is a maxim, one should think, obvious to common sense ; and yet it is only of late years that it has begun to gain ground even among philosophers. It is but justice to Rousseau to acknowledge, that the zeal and eloquence with which he has enforced it, go far to compensate the mischievous tendency of some of his other doctrines.

¹ Such, for example, as this, that "A child should never be suffered to have what he craves, or *so much as speaks for*, much less if he cries for it !" A maxim (as his correspondent Molyneux observes) "which seems to bear hard on the tender spirits of children, and the natural affections of parents." (Locke's *Works*, Vol. IX. p. 319.)

To the same causes it was probably owing, that Locke has availed himself so little in his *Conduct of the Understanding*, of his own favourite doctrine of the Association of Ideas. He has been, indeed, at sufficient pains to warn parents and guardians of the mischievous consequences to be apprehended from this part of our constitution, if not diligently watched over in our infant years. But he seems to have altogether overlooked the positive and immense resources which might be derived from it, in the culture and amelioration, both of our intellectual and moral powers;—in strengthening (for instance), by early *habits* of right thinking, the authority of reason and of conscience;—in blending with our best feelings the congenial and ennobling sympathies of taste and of fancy;—and in identifying with the first workings of the imagination, those pleasing views of the order of the universe, which are so essentially necessary to human happiness. A law of our nature, so mighty and so extensive in its influence, was surely not given to man in vain; and the fatal *purchase* which it has, in all ages, afforded to Machiavellian statesmen, and to political religionists, in carrying into effect their joint conspiracy against the improvement and welfare of our species, is the most decisive proof of the manifold uses to which it might be turned in the hands of instructors, well disposed and well qualified humbly to co-operate with the obvious and unerring purposes of Divine Wisdom.

A more convenient opportunity will afterwards occur for taking some notice of Locke's writings on Money and Trade, and on the Principles of Government. They appear to me to be connected less naturally and closely with the literary history of the times when they appeared, than with the systematical views which were opened on the same subjects, about fifty years afterwards, by some speculative politicians in France and in England. I shall, therefore, delay any remarks on them which I have to offer, till we arrive at the period, when the questions to which they relate began everywhere to at-

tract the attention of the learned world, and to be discussed on those general principles of expediency and equity, which form the basis of the modern science of Political Economy. With respect to his merits as a logical and metaphysical reformer, enough has been already said for this introductory section : but I shall have occasion, more than once, to recur to them in the following pages, when I come to review those later theories, of which the germs or rudiments may be distinctly traced in his works ; and of which he is, therefore, entitled to divide the praise with such of his successors as have reared to maturity the prolific seeds scattered by his hand.¹

SECTION II.

CONTINUATION OF THE REVIEW OF LOCKE AND LEIBNITZ.

LEIBNITZ.

INDEPENDENTLY of the pre-eminent rank, which the versatile talents, and the universal learning of Leibnitz entitle him to hold among the illustrious men who adorned the Continent of Europe during the eighteenth century, there are other considerations which have determined me to unite his name with that of Locke, in fixing the commencement of the period, on the history of which I am now to enter. The school of which he was the founder was strongly discriminat-

¹ And yet with what modesty does Locke speak of his own pretensions as a Philosopher ! “ In an age that produces such masters as the great Huygenius and the incomparable Mr. Newton, it is ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge.” (*Essay on Human Understanding. Epistle to the Reader.*) See Note (F.)

ed from that of Locke, by the general spirit of its doctrines; and to this school a large proportion of the metaphysicians, and also of the mathematicians of Germany, Holland, France, and Italy, have, ever since his time, had a decided leaning. On the fundamental question, indeed, concerning the *Origin of our Knowledge*, the philosophers of the Continent (with the exception of the Germans, and a few eminent individuals in other countries) have, in general, sided with Locke, or rather with Gassendi; but, in most other instances, a partiality for the opinions, and a deference for the authority of Leibnitz, may be traced in their speculations, both on metaphysical and physical subjects. Hence a striking contrast between the characteristical features of the continental philosophy, and those of the contemporary systems which have succeeded each other in our own island; the great proportion of our most noted writers, notwithstanding the opposition of their sentiments on particular points, having either attached themselves, or professed to attach themselves, to the method of inquiry recommended and exemplified by Locke.

But the circumstance which chiefly induced me to assign to Leibnitz so prominent a place in this historical sketch, is the extraordinary influence of his industry and zeal, in uniting, by a mutual communication of intellectual lights and of moral sympathies, the most powerful and leading minds scattered over Christendom. Some preliminary steps towards such an union had been already taken by Wallis in England, and by Mersenne in France; but the *literary commerce*, of which they were the centres, was confined almost exclusively to Mathematics and to Physics; while the comprehensive correspondence of Leibnitz extended alike to every pursuit interesting to man, either as a speculative or as an active being. From this time forward, accordingly, the history of philosophy involves, in a far greater degree than at any former period, the general history of the human mind; and we

shall find, in our attempts to trace its farther progress, our attention more and more irresistibly withdrawn from local details to more enlarged views of the globe which we inhabit. A striking change in this literary commerce among nations took place, at least in the western parts of Europe, before the death of Leibnitz; but, during the remainder of the last century, it continued to proceed with an accelerated rapidity over the whole face of the civilized world. A multitude of causes, undoubtedly, conspired to produce it; but I know of no individual whose name is better entitled, than that of Leibnitz, to mark the era of its commencement.¹

I have already, in treating of the philosophy of Locke, said enough, and perhaps more than enough, of the opinion of Leibnitz concerning the origin of our knowledge. Although expressed in a different phraseology, it agrees in the most essential points with the *innate ideas* of the Cartesians; but it approaches still more nearly to some of the mystical speculations of Plato. The very exact coincidence between the language of Leibnitz on this question, and that of his contemporary Cudworth, whose mind, like his own, was deeply tinged with the Platonic Metaphysics, is not unworthy of notice here, as an historical fact; and it is the only remark on this part of his system which I mean to add, at present, to those in the preceding history.

¹ The following maxims of Leibnitz deserve the serious attention of all who have at heart the improvement of mankind:

“On trouve dans le monde plusieurs personnes bien intentionnées; mais le mal est, qu’elles ne s’entendent point, et ne travaillent point de concert. S’il y avoit moyen de trouver une espèce de glu pour les reunir, on feroit quelque chose. Le mal est souvent que les gens de bien ont quelques caprices ou opinions particulières, qui font qu’ils sont contraires entr’eux L’esprit sectaire consiste proprement dans cette prétention de vouloir que les autres se reglent sur nos maximes, au lieu qu’on se devoit contenter de voir qu’on aille au but principal.” (Leib. *Op.* Tom. I. p. 740.)

“The *seeds* of our acquired knowledge,” says Leibnitz, “or, in other words, our *ideas*, and the eternal truths which are derived from them, are contained in the mind itself; nor is this wonderful, since we know by our own consciousness, that we possess within ourselves the ideas of *existence*, of *unity*, of *substance*, of *action*, and other ideas of a similar nature.” To the same purpose, we are told by Cudworth, that “the mind contains in itself virtually (as the future plant or tree is contained in the *seed*) general notions of all things, which unfold and discover themselves as occasions invite, and proper circumstances occur.”

The metaphysical theories; to the establishment of which Leibnitz chiefly directed the force of his genius, are the doctrine of *Pre-established Harmony*; and the scheme of *Optimism*, as new modelled by himself. On neither of these heads will it be necessary for me long to detain my readers.

I. According to the system of *Pre-established Harmony*, the human mind and human body are two independent but constantly correspondent machines;—adjusted to each other like two unconnected clocks, so constructed, that, at the same instant, the one should *point* the hour, and the other *strike* it. Of this system the following summary and illustration are given by Leibnitz himself, in his Essay entitled *Theodicæa*:

“I cannot help coming into this notion, that God created the *soul* in such manner at first, that it should *represent* within itself all the simultaneous changes in the body; and that he has made the body also in such manner, as that it must of itself do what the *soul* wills:—So that the laws which make the thoughts of the soul follow each other in regular succession, *must* produce *images* which shall be coincident with the impressions made by external objects upon our organs of sense; while the laws by which the motions of the body follow each other, are likewise so coincident

with the thoughts of the soul, as to give to our *volitions* and *actions* the very same appearance, as if the latter were really the natural and the necessary consequences of the former." (Leib. *Op.* I. p. 163.) Upon another occasion he observes, that "every thing goes on in the soul as if it had no body, and that everything goes on in the body as if it had no soul." (*Ibid.* II. p. 44.)

To convey his meaning still more fully, Leibnitz borrows from Mr. Jaquelot¹ a comparison, which, whatever may be thought of its justness, must be at least allowed some merit in point of ingenuity. "Suppose that an intelligent and powerful being, who knew, beforehand, every particular thing that I should order my footman to do to-morrow, should make a machine to resemble my footman exactly, and punctually to perform, all day, whatever I directed. On this supposition, would not *my will*, in issuing all the details of my orders, remain, in every respect, in the same circumstances as before? And would not my machine-footman, in performing his different movements, have the appearance of acting only in obedience to my commands?" The inference to be drawn from this comparison is, that the movements of my body have no direct dependence whatever on the volitions of my mind, any more than the actions of my machine-footman would have on the words issuing from my lips. The same inference is to be extended to the relation which the *impressions* made on my different senses bear to the co-existent perceptions arising in my mind. The impressions and perceptions have no mutual *connection*, resembling that of physical causes with their effects; but the one series of events is made to correspond invariably with the other, in consequence of an eternal *harmony* between them, *pre-established* by their common Creator.

¹ Author of a book entitled *Conformité de la Foi avec la Raison*.

From this outline of the scheme of *Pre-established Harmony*, it is manifest, that it took its rise from the very same train of thinking which produced Malebranche's doctrine of *Occasional Causes*. The authors of both theories saw clearly the impossibility of tracing the mode in which mind acts on body, or body on mind; and hence were led rashly to conclude, that the *connection* or *union* which seems to exist between them is not real, but apparent. The inferences, however, which they drew from this common principle were directly opposite; Malebranche maintaining, that the communication between mind and body was carried on by the immediate and incessant agency of the Deity; while Leibnitz conceived, that the agency of God was employed only in the original contrivance and mutual adjustment of the two machines;—all the subsequent phenomena of each, being the necessary results of its own independent mechanism, and, at the same time, the progressive evolutions of a comprehensive design, harmonizing the laws of the one with those of the other.

Of these two opposite hypotheses, that of Leibnitz is by far the more unphilosophical and untenable. The chief objection to the doctrine of *occasional causes* is, that it presumes to decide upon a question of which human reason is altogether incompetent to judge;—our ignorance of the mode in which matter acts upon mind, or mind upon matter, furnishing not the shadow of a proof that the one may not act directly and immediately on the other, in some way incomprehensible by our faculties.¹ But the doctrine of

¹ The mutual action (or, as it was called in the schools), the mutual *influence* (*influxus*) of soul and body, was, till the time of Descartes, the prevailing hypothesis, both among the learned and the vulgar. The reality of this *influx*, if not positively denied by Descartes, was at least mentioned by him as a subject of doubt; but by Malebranche and Leibnitz it was confidently rejected as absurd and impossible. (See their works *passim*.) Gravesande, who had a very strong leaning towards

Pre-established Harmony, besides being equally liable to this objection, labours under the additional disadvantage of

the doctrines of Leibnitz, had yet the good sense to perceive the inconclusiveness of his reasoning in this particular instance, and states in opposition to it the following sound and decisive remarks: "Non concipio, quomodo mens in corpus agere possit; non etiam video, quomodo ex motu nervi perceptio sequatur; non tamen indè sequi mihi apparet, omnem *influxum* esse rejiciendum.

"Substantiæ incognitæ sunt. Jam vidimus naturam mentis nos latere; scimus hanc esse aliquid, quod ideas habet, has confert, &c.; sed ignoramus quid sit subjectum, cui hæ proprietates convenient.

"Hoc idem de corpore dicimus; est extensum, impenetrabile, &c. sed quid est quod habet hasce proprietates? Nulla nobis via aperte est, quâ ad hanc cognitionem pervenire possumus.

"Indè concludimus, multa nos latere, quæ proprietates mentis et corporis spectant.

"Invictâ demonstratione constat, non mentem in corpus, neque hoc in illam agere, ut corpus in corpus agit; sed mihi non videtur indè concludi posse, omnem *influxum* esse impossibilem.

"Motu suo corpus non agit in aliud corpus, sine resistente; sed an non actio, omnino diversa, et cujus ideam non habemus, in aliam substantiam dari possit, et ita tamen, ut causa effectui respondeat, in re adeò obscurâ, determinare non ausim. Difficile certè est influxum negare, quando exactè perpendimus, quomodò in minimis quæ mens percipit, relatio detur cum agitationibus in corpore, et quomodò hujus motus cum mentis determinationibus convenient. Attendo ad illa quæ medici, et anatomici, nos de his docent.

"Nihil, ergo, de systemate *influxus* determino, præter hoc, mihi nondum hujus impossibilitatem satis clarè demonstratam esse videri."—(*Introductio ad Philosophiam.*) See Note (G.)

With respect to the manner in which the intercourse between Mind and Matter is carried on, a very rash assertion escaped Mr. Locke in the first edition of his *Essay*. "The next thing to be considered is, how bodies produce ideas in us, and that is manifestly by impulse, the only way which we can conceive bodies operate in." (*Essay*, B. II. ch. viii. § 11.)

In the course of Locke's controversial discussions with the Bishop of Worcester, he afterwards became fully sensible of this important oversight; and he had the candour to acknowledge his error in the following terms: "'Tis true, I have said, that bodies operate by impulse, and nothing else. And

involving a perplexed and totally inconsistent conception of the nature of *Mechanism*;—an inconsistency, by the way, with which all those philosophers are justly chargeable, who imagine that, by likening the universe to a machine, they get rid of the necessity of admitting the constant agency of powers essentially different from the known qualities of matter. The word *Mechanism* properly expresses a combination of natural powers to produce a certain effect. When such a combination is successful, a machine, once set a going, will sometimes continue to perform its office for a considerable time, without requiring the interposition of the artist: And hence we are led to conclude, that the case may perhaps be similar with respect to the universe, when once put into motion by the Deity. This idea Leibnitz carried so far as to exclude the supposition of any subsequent agency in the first contriver and mover, excepting in the case of a miracle. But the falseness of the analogy appears from this, that the moving force in every machine is some *natural power*, such as gravity or elasticity; and, consequently, the very idea of mechanism assumes the existence of those active powers, of which it is the professed object of a mechanical theory of the universe to give an explanation. Whether, therefore, with Malebranche, we resolve every effect into the immediate agency of God, or suppose, with the great majority of Newtonians, that he employs the instrumentality of second causes to accomplish his purposes, we are equally forced to admit with Bacon,

so I thought when I writ it, and can yet conceive no other way of their operations. But I am since convinced, by the judicious Mr. Newton's incomparable book, that it is too bold a presumption to limit God's power in this point by my narrow conceptions. * * * * * And, therefore, in the next edition of my book, I will take care to have that passage rectified."

It is a circumstance that can only be accounted for by the variety of Mr. Locke's other pursuits, that in all the later editions of the *Essay* which have fallen in my way, the proposition in question has been allowed to remain as it originally stood.

the necessity not only of a first contriver and mover, but of his constant and efficient concurrence (either immediately or mediately) in carrying his design into execution :—
“Opus, (says Bacon) quod operatur Deus a primordio usque ad finem.”

In what I have now said I have confined myself to the idea of *Mechanism* as it applies to the material universe ; for, as to this word, when applied by Leibnitz to the mind, which he calls a *Spiritual Automaton*, I confess myself quite unable to annex a meaning to it : I shall not, therefore, offer any remarks on this part of his system.¹

To these visionary speculations of Leibnitz, a strong and instructive contrast is exhibited in the philosophy of Locke ; a philosophy, the main object of which is less to enlarge our knowledge, than to make us sensible of our ignorance ; or (as the author himself expresses it) “to prevail with the busy mind of man to be cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension ; to stop when it is at the utmost extent of its tether ; and to sit down in a quiet ignorance of those things, which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities.” “My right hand writes,” says Locke, in another part of his *Essay*, “whilst my left hand is still. What causes rest in one, and motion in the other ? Nothing but my will, a thought of my mind ; my thought only changing, my right hand rests, and the left

¹ Absurd as the hypothesis of a *Pre-established Harmony* may now appear, not many years have elapsed since it was the prevailing, or rather universal creed, among the philosophers of Germany. “Il fut un temps” (says the celebrated Euler) “ou le système de l’harmonie pré-établie étoit tellement en vogue dans toute l’Allemagne, que ceux qui en doutoient, passoient pour des ignorans, ou des esprits bornés.” (*Lettres de M. Euler à une Princesse d’Allemagne*, 83^e Lettre.) It would be amusing to reckon up the succession of metaphysical creeds which have been since swallowed with the same implicit faith by this learned and speculative, and (in all those branches of knowledge where imagination has no influence over the judgment) profound and inventive nation.

hand moves. *This is matter of fact which cannot be denied.* Explain this and make it intelligible, and then the next step will be to understand Creation. In the mean time, it is an overvaluing ourselves, to reduce all to the narrow measure of our capacities; and to conclude all things impossible to be done, whose manner of doing exceeds our comprehension. If you do not understand the operations of your own finite Mind, that thinking thing within you, do not deem it strange that you cannot comprehend the operations of that eternal infinite Mind, who made and governs all things, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.” (Vol. II. pp. 249, 250.)

This contrast between the philosophical characters of Locke and of Leibnitz is the more deserving of notice, as something of the same sort has ever since continued to mark and to discriminate the metaphysical researches of the English and of the German schools. Various exceptions to this remark may, no doubt, be mentioned; but these exceptions will be found of trifling moment, when compared with the indisputable extent of its general application.

The theory of pre established harmony led, by a natural and obvious transition, to the scheme of Optimism. As it

¹ That this is a fair representation of the scope of Locke's philosophy, according to the author's own view of it, is demonstrated by the two mottos prefixed to the *Essay on Human Understanding*. The one is a passage of the book of *Ecclesiastes*, which, from the place it occupies in the front of his work, may be presumed to express what he himself regarded as the most important moral to be drawn from his speculations. “As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so, thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all things.” The other motto (from Cicero) strongly expresses a sentiment which every competent judge must feel on comparing the above quotations from Locke, with the *monads* and the *pre-established harmony* of Leibnitz “Quam bellum est velle confiteri potius nescire quod nescias, quam ista effutientem nauseare, atque ipsum sibi displicere!” See Note (H.)

represented all events, both in the physical and moral worlds, as the necessary effects of a mechanism originally contrived and set a-going by the Deity, it reduced its author to the alternative of either calling in question the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, or of asserting that the universe which he had called into being was the best of all possible systems. This last opinion, accordingly, was eagerly embraced by Leibnitz; and forms the subject of a work entitled *Theodicæa*, in which are combined together, in an extraordinary degree, the acuteness of the logician, the imagination of the poet, and the impenetrable, yet sublime darkness, of the metaphysical theologian.¹

The modification of Optimism, however, adopted by Leibnitz, was, in some essential respects, peculiar to himself. It differed from that of Plato, and of some other sages of antiquity, in considering the human mind in the light of a *spiritual machine*, and, of consequence, in positively denying the freedom of human actions. According to Plato, every thing is right, so far as it is the work of God;—the creation of beings endowed with free will, and consequently liable to moral delinquency;—and the government of the world by general laws, from which occasional evils *must* result,—furnishing no objection to the perfection of the universe, to which a satisfactory reply may not be found in the partial and narrow views of it, to which our faculties are at present confined. But he held at the same time, that, although the permission of mo-

¹ “La Théodicée seule (says Fontenelle) suffiroit pour représenter M. Leibnitz. Une lecture immense, des anecdotes curieuses sur les livres ou les personnes, beaucoup d’équité et même de faveur pour tous les auteurs cités, fut ce en les combattant; des vues sublimes et lumineuses, des raisonnemens au fond desquels on sent toujours l’esprit géométrique, un style ou la force domine, et ou cependant sont admis les agrémens d’une imagination heureuse.”—*Eloge de Leibnitz*.

ral evil does not detract from the goodness of God, it is nevertheless imputable to man as a fault, and renders him justly obnoxious to punishment. This system (under a variety of forms) has been in all ages maintained by the wisest and best philosophers, who, while they were anxious to vindicate the perfections of God, saw the importance of stating their doctrine in a manner not inconsistent with man's free will and moral agency.

The scheme of Optimism, on the contrary, as proposed by Leibnitz, is completely subversive of these cardinal truths. It was, indeed, viewed by the great and excellent author in a very different light; but in the judgment of the most impartial and profound inquirers, it leads, by a short and demonstrative process, to the annihilation of all moral distinctions.¹

¹ It is observed by Dr. Akenside, that "the Theory of Optimism has been delivered of late, especially abroad, in a manner which subverts the freedom of human actions; whereas Plato appears very careful to preserve it, and has been in that respect imitated by the best of his followers." (Notes on the 2d Book of the *Pleasures of the Imagination*.)

I am perfectly aware, at the same time, that different opinions have been entertained of Plato's real sentiments on this subject; and I readily grant that passages with respect to Fate and Necessity may be collected from his works, which it would be very difficult to reconcile with any one consistent scheme. (See the Notes of Mosheim on his Latin Version of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Tome I. pp. 10. 310, *et seq.* Lugd. Batav. 1773)

Without entering at all into this question, I may be permitted here to avail myself, for the sake of conciseness, of Plato's name, to distinguish that modification of optimism which I have opposed in the text to the optimism of Leibnitz. The following sentence, in the 10th Book *De Republica*, seems sufficient of itself to authorize this liberty: *Αρετη δ' αδεσποτον, ην τιμων και ατιμαζων, πλεον και ελαττον αυτης εξει. αιτια ελομενε Θεος αναιτιος. Virtus inviolabilis ac libera quam prout honorabit quis aut negliget, ita plus aut minus ex ea possidebit. Eligentis quidam culpa est omnis Deus vero extra culpam.*

A short abstract of the allegory with which Leibnitz concludes his *Theodicea*, will convey a clearer idea of the scope of that work, than I could hope to do by any metaphysical com-

It is of great importance to attend to the distinction between these two systems; because it has, of late, become

ment. The ground-work of this allegory is taken from a dialogue on Free-Will, written by Laurentius Valla, in opposition to Boethius;—in which dialogue, Sextus, the son of Tarquin the Proud, is introduced as consulting Apollo about his destiny. Apollo predicts to him that he is to violate Lucretia, and afterwards, with his family, to be expelled from Rome. (*Exul inopisque caules iratâ pulsus ab urbe.*) Sextus complains of the prediction. Apollo replies, that the fault is not his; that he has only the gift of seeing into futurity;* that all things are regulated by Jupiter; and that it is to him his complaint should be addressed. (*Here finishes the allegory of Valla, which Leibnitz thus continues, agreeably to his own principles.*) In consequence of the advice of the Oracle, Sextus goes to Dodona to complain to Jupiter of the crime which he is destined to perpetrate. “Why (says he), oh Jupiter! have you made me wicked and miserable? Either change my lot and my will, or admit that the fault is yours, not mine.” Jupiter replies to him: “Renounce all thoughts of Rome and of the crown; be wise, and you shall be happy. If you return to Rome you are undone.” Sextus, unwilling to submit to such a sacrifice, quits the Temple, and abandons himself to his fate.

After his departure, the high priest, Theodorus, asks Jupiter why he had not given another *Will* to Sextus. Jupiter sends Theodorus to Athens to consult Minerva. The goddess shows him the Palace of the Destinies, where are representations of all possible worlds,† each of them containing a Sextus Tarquinius with a different *Will*, leading to a catastrophe more or less happy. In the last and best of these worlds, forming the summit of the pyramid composed by the others, the high priest sees Sextus go to Rome, throw every thing into confusion, and violate the wife of his friend. “You see” (says the Goddess of Wisdom) “it was not my father that made Sextus wicked. He was wicked from all eternity, and he was always so in consequence of his own will.‡ Jupiter has only bestowed on him that existence which he could not refuse him in the best of all possible worlds. He only transferred him from the region of *possible* to

* “Futura novi, non facio.”

† *World* (it must be remembered) is here synonymous with *Universe*.

‡ “Vides Sextum a Patre meo non fuisse factum improbum, talis quippe ab omni æternitate fuit, et quidem semper liberé; existere tantum ei concessit Jupiter, quod ipsum profecto ejus sapientia mundo, in quo ille continebatur, denegare non poterat: ergo Sextum e regione possibilium ad rerum existentium classem transtulit.”

customary among sceptical writers, to confound them studiously together, in order to extend to both that ridicule to which the latter is justly entitled. This, in particular, was the case with Voltaire, who, in many parts of his later works, and more especially in his *Candide*, has, under the pretence of exposing the extravagancies of Leibnitz, indulged his satirical raillery against the order of the universe. The success of his attempt was much aided by the confused and inaccurate manner in which the scheme of optimism had been recently stated by various writers, who, in their zeal to “vindicate the ways of God,” had been led to hazard principles more dangerous in their consequences, than the prejudices and errors which it was their aim to correct.¹

that of *actual* beings. What great events does the crime of Sextus draw after it? The liberty of Rome—the rise of a government fertile in civil and military virtues, and of an empire destined to conquer and to civilize the earth.” Theodorus returns thanks to the goddess, and acknowledges the justice of Jupiter.

¹ Among this number must be included the author of the *Essay on Man*, who, from a want of precision in his metaphysical ideas, has unconsciously fallen into various expressions, equally inconsistent with each other and with his own avowed opinions :

If plagues and earthquakes break not Heaven’s design,
Why then a Borgia or a Cataline?—
Who knows but He whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms,
Pours fierce ambition on a Cæsar’s mind,
Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge Mankind?—
* * * * *

—The general order, since the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

This approaches very nearly to the optimism of Leibnitz, and has certainly nothing in common with the optimism of Plato. Nor is it possible to reconcile it with the sentiments inculcated by Pope in other parts of the same poem.

What makes all physical and moral ill?
There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.

In this last couplet he seems to admit, not only that *Will* may *wander*, but that *Nature* herself may *deviate* from the *general*

The zeal of Leibnitz in propagating the dogma of Necessity is not easily reconcileable with the hostility which (as I have already remarked) he uniformly displays against the congenial doctrine of Materialism. Such, however, is the fact, and I believe it to be quite unprecedented in the previous history of philosophy. Spinoso himself has not pushed the argument for necessity further than Leibnitz,—the reasonings of both concluding not less forcibly against the free-will of God than against the free-will of man, and, of consequence, terminating ultimately in *this* proposition, that no event in the universe could possibly have been different from what has actually taken place. The *distinguishing* feature of this article of the Leibnitzian creed is, that, while the Hobbists and Spinosists were employing their ingenuity in connecting together Materialism and Necessity, as branches springing from one common root, Leibnitz¹ always speaks of

order; whereas the doctrine of his universal prayer is, that, while the material world is subjected to established laws, man is left to be the arbiter of his own destiny:

Yet gav'st me in this dark estate
To know the good from ill,
And, binding Nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

In the Dunciad, too, the scheme of *Necessity* is coupled with that of *Materialism*, as one of the favourite doctrines of the sect of free-thinkers.

Of nought so certain as our *Reason* still,
Of nought so doubtful as of *Soul* and *Will*.

“Two things” (says Warburton, who professes to speak Pope's sentiments) “the most self-evident, the existence of our souls and the freedom of our will!”

¹ So completely, indeed, and so mathematically linked, did Leibnitz conceive all truths, both physical and moral, to be with each other, that he represents the eternal geometrician as incessantly occupied in the solution of this problem,—*The state of one Monad (or elementary atom) being given, to determine the state, past, present, and future, of the whole universe.*

the soul as a machine purely *spiritual*,¹—a machine, however, as necessarily regulated by pre-ordained and immutable laws as the movements of a clock or the revolutions of the planets. In consequence of holding this language, he seemed to represent Man in a less degrading light than other necessitarians ; but, in as far as such speculative tenets may be supposed to have any practical effect on human conduct, the tendency of his doctrines is not less dangerous than that of the most obnoxious systems avowed by his predecessors.²

¹ “Cuncta itaque in homine certa sunt, et in antecessum determinata, uti in cæteris rebus omnibus, et anima humana est *spirituale quoddam automaton*.” (Leib. *Op.* Tom. I. p. 156.)

In a note on this sentence, the editor quotes a passage from Bilfinger, a learned German, in which an attempt is made to vindicate the propriety of the phrase, by a reference to the etymology of the word *automaton*. This word, it is observed, when traced to its source, literally expresses something which contains within itself its principle of motion, and, consequently, it applies still more literally to *Mind* than to a machine. The remark, considered in a philological point of view, is indisputably just ; but is it not evident, that it leads to a conclusion precisely contrary to what this author would deduce from it ? Whatever may have been the primitive meaning of the word, its common, or rather its universal meaning, even among scientific writers, is, a *material* machine, moving without any foreign impulse ; and, that this was the idea annexed to it by Leibnitz, appears from his distinguishing it by the epithet *spirituale*,—an epithet which would have been altogether superfluous had he intended to convey the opinion ascribed to him by Bilfinger. In applying, therefore, this language to the mind, we may conclude, with confidence, that Leibnitz had no intention to contrast together mind and body, in respect of their moving or actuating principles, but only to contrast them in respect of the *substances* of which they are composed. In a word, he conceived both of them to be equally *machines*, made and wound up by the Supreme Being ; but the machinery in the one case to be material, and in the other spiritual.

² The following remark in Madame de Staël's interesting and eloquent review of German philosophy bears marks of a haste and precipitation with which her criticisms are seldom chargeable : “Les opinions de Leibnitz tendent surtout au perfectionnement moral, s'il est vrai, comme les philosophes Al-

The scheme of necessity was still farther adorned and sublimed in the *Theodicea* of Leibnitz, by an imagination nurtured and trained in the school of Plato. "May there not exist" (he asks on one occasion) "an immense space beyond the region of the stars? and may not this *empyreal* heaven be filled with happiness and glory? It may be conceived to resemble an ocean, where the rivers of all those created beings that are destined for bliss shall finish their course, when arrived in the starry system, at the perfection of their respective natures." (Leib. *Op.* Tom. I. p. 135.)¹

In various other instances, he rises from the deep and seemingly hopeless abyss of *Fatalism*, to the same lofty conceptions of the universe; and has thus invested the most humiliating article of the atheistic creed, with an air of Platonic mysticism. The influence of his example appears to me to have contributed much to corrupt the taste

lemands ont taché de le prouver, que le libre arbitre repose sur la doctrine qui affranchit l'ame des objets exterieures, et que la vertu ne puisse exister sans la parfaite independance du vouloir."

¹ The celebrated *Charles Bonnet*, in his work entitled *Contemplation de la Nature*, has indulged his imagination so far, in following out the above conjecture of Leibnitz, as to rival some of the wildest flights of Jacob Behmen. "Mais l'échelle de la création ne se termine point au plus élevés des mondes planétaires. Là commence un autre univers, dont l'étendue est peut-être à celle de l'univers des *Fixes*, ce qu'est l'espace du système solaire à la capacité d'une noix.

"Là, comme des ASTRES resplendissans, brillent les HIERARCHIES CELESTES.

"Là rayonnent de toutes parts les ANGES, les ARCHANGES, les SERAPHINS, les CHERUBINS, les TRONES, les VERTUS, les PRINCIPAUTES, les DOMINATIONS, les PUISSANCES.

"Au centre de ses AUGUSTES SPHERES, éclate le SOLEIL DE JUSTICE, l'ORIENT D'ENHAUT, dont tous les ASTRES empruntent leur lumière et leur splendeur."

"La *Theodicée* de Leibnitz" (the same author tells us in another passage) "est un de mes livres de devotion: J'ai intitulé mon Exemplaire, *Manuel de Philosophie Chrétienne*."

and to bewilder the speculations of his countrymen; giving birth, in the last result, to that heterogeneous combination of all that is pernicious in Spinozism, with the transcendental eccentricities of a heated and exalted fancy, which, for many years past, has so deeply tinctured both their philosophy and their works of fiction.¹

¹ "The gross appetite of Love (says Gibbon) becomes most dangerous when it is elevated, or rather disguised, by sentimental passion." The remark is strikingly applicable to some of the most popular novels and dramas of Germany; and something very similar to it will be found to hold with respect to those speculative extravagancies which, in the German systems of philosophy, are *elevated* or *disguised* by the imposing cant of moral enthusiasm.

In one of Leibnitz's controversial discussions with Dr. Clarke, there is a passage which throws some light on his taste, not only in matters of science, but in judging of works of imagination "Du temps de M. Boyle, et d'autres excellens hommes qui fleurissoient en Angleterre sous Charles II. on n'auroit pas osé nous debiter *des notions si creuses*. (*The notions here alluded to are those of Newton concerning the law of gravitation.*) J'espere que le beaultemps reviendra sous un aussi bon gouvernement que celui d'à present. Le capital de M. Boyle etoit d'inculquer que tout se faisoit *méchaniquement* dans la physique. Mais c'est un malheur des hommes, de se degouter enfin de la raison même, et de s'ennuyer de la lumière. Les chimères commence à revenir, et plaisent parce qu'elles ont quelque chose de merveilleux. Il arrive dans le pays philosophique ce qui est arrivé dans le pays poetique. On s'est lassé des Romans raisonnables, tel que *la Clélie Française* ou *l'Aramene Allemande*; et on est revenu depuis quelque temps aux *Contes des Fées*." (*Cinquième Ecrit de M. Leibnitz*, p. 266.)

From this passage it would seem, that Leibnitz looked forward to the period, when the dreams of the Newtonian philosophy would give way to some of the exploded mechanical theories of the universe; and when the *Fairy-tales* then in fashion (among which number must have been included those of Count Anthony Hamilton) would be supplanted by the revival of such *reasonable Romances* as the *Grand Clelia*. In neither of these instances does there seem to be much probability at present, that his prediction will be ever verified.

The German writers, who, of late years, have made the greatest noise among the sciolists of this country, will be found

In other parts of Europe, the effects of the *Theodicæa* have not been equally unfavourable. In France, more particularly, it has furnished to the few who have cultivated with success the Philosophy of Mind, new weapons for combating the materialism of the Gassendists and Hobbists; and, in England, we are indebted to it for the irresistible reasonings by which Clarke subverted the foundations on which the whole superstructure of Fatalism rests.¹

less indebted for their fame to the new lights which they have struck out, than to the unexpected and grotesque forms in which they have combined together the materials supplied by the invention of former ages, and of other nations. It is this combination of truth and error in their philosophical systems, and of right and wrong in their works of fiction, which has enabled them to perplex the understandings, and to unsettle the principles of so many, both in Metaphysics and Ethics. In point of profound and extensive erudition, the scholars of Germany still continue to maintain their long established superiority over the rest of Europe.

¹ A very interesting account is given by Leibnitz of the circumstances which gave occasion to his *Theodicæa*, in a letter to a Scotch gentleman, Mr. Burnet of Kemney; to whom he seems to have unbosomed himself on all subjects without any reserve: “Mon livre intitulé, *Essais de Theodicée*, sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l’homme, et l’origine de mal, sera bientôt achevé. La plus grande partie de cet ouvrage avoit été faite par lambeaux, quand je me trouvois chez le feu Reine de Prusse, ou ces matières étoient souvent agitées à l’occasion du Dictionnaire et des autres ouvrages de M. Bayle, qu’on y lisoit beaucoup. Après la mort de cette grande Princesse, j’ai rassemblé et augmenté ces pièces sur l’exhortation des amis qui en étoient informés, et j’en ai fait l’ouvrage dont je viens de parler. Comme j’ai médité sur cette matière depuis ma jeunesse, je pretends de l’avoir discutée à fond.” (Leibnitz, *Opera*, Tom. VI. p. 284.)

In another letter to the same correspondent he expresses himself thus:

“La plupart de mes sentimens ont été enfin arrêtés après une délibération de 20 ans: car j’ai commencé bien jeune à méditer, et je n’avois pas encore 15 ans, quand je me promenois des journées entières dans un bois, pour prendre parti entre Aristote et Democrite. Cependant j’ai changé et réchangé sur des nouvelles lumières, et ce n’est que depuis environ 12 ans que je

It may be justly regarded as a proof of the progress of reason and good sense among the Metaphysicians of this

me trouve satisfait, et que je suis arrivé à des démonstrations sur ces matières qui n'en paroissent point capables : Cependant de la manière que je m'y prends, ces démonstrations peuvent être sensibles comme celles des nombres, quoique le sujet passe l'imagination." (*Ibid.* p. 253.)

The letter from which this last paragraph is taken is dated in the year 1697.

My chief reason for introducing these extracts, was to do away an absurd suspicion, which has been countenanced by some respectable writers (among others by Le Clerc), that the opinions maintained in the *Theodicée* of Leibnitz were not his real sentiments, and that his own creed, on the most important questions there discussed, was not very different from that of Bayle. Gibbon has even gone so far as to say, that "in his defence of the attributes and providence of the Deity, he was suspected of a secret correspondence with his adversary." (*Antiquities of the House of Brunswick.*) In support of this very improbable charge, I do not know that any evidence has ever been produced, but the following passage, in a letter of his, addressed to a Professor of Theology in the University of Tübingen (Pfaffius) : "Ita prorsus est, vir summe reverende, uti scribis, de Theodicæa mea. Rem acu tetigisti; et miror, neminem hactenus fuisse, qui sensum hunc meum senserit. Neque enim Philosophorum est rem serio semper agere; qui in fingendis hypothesibus, uti bene mones, ingenii sui vires experiuntur. Tu, qui Theologus, in refutandis erroribus Theologum agis." In reply to this it is observed, by the learned editor of Leibnitz's works, that it is much more probable that Leibnitz should have expressed himself on this particular occasion in jocular and ironical terms, than that he should have wasted so much ingenuity and learning in support of an hypothesis to which he attached no faith whatever; an hypothesis (he might have added) with which the whole principles of his philosophy are systematically, and, as he conceived, mathematically connected. It is difficult to believe, that, among the innumerable correspondents of Leibnitz, he should have selected a Professor of Theology at Tübingen, as the sole depositary of a secret which he was anxious to conceal from all the rest of the world.

Surely a solitary document such as this weighs less than nothing when opposed to the details quoted in the beginning of this note; not to mention its complete inconsistency with the character of Leibnitz, and with the whole tenor of his writings.

country since the time of Leibnitz, that the two theories of which I have been speaking, and which, not more than a century ago, were honoured by the opposition of such an antagonist as Clarke, are now remembered only as subjects of literary history.—In the arguments, however, alleged in support of these theories, there are some *logical* principles involved, which still continue to have an extensive influence over the reasonings of the learned, on questions seemingly the most remote from all metaphysical conclusions. The two most prominent of these are, the principle of the *Sufficient Reason*, and the *Law of Continuity*; both of them so intimately connected with some of the most celebrated disputes of the last century, as to require a more particular notice than may, at first sight, seem due to their importance.

1. Of the principle of the *Sufficient Reason*, the following succinct account is given by Leibnitz himself, in his controversial correspondence with Dr. Clarke: “The great foundation of Mathematics is the principle of *contradiction* or *identity*; that is, that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time. But, in order to proceed from Mathematics to Natural Philosophy, another principle is requisite (as I have observed in my *Theodicæa*); I mean, the principle of the *Sufficient Reason*; or, in other words, that nothing happens without a *reason* why it should be so, rather than otherwise: And, accordingly, Archimedes was obliged, in his book *De Æquilibrio*, to take for granted, that if there be a balance, in which every thing is alike on both sides, and if equal weights are hung on the two ends of that balance, the whole will be at rest. It is because no *reason* can be given why one side should weigh down rather than

For my own part, I cannot help thinking, that the passage in question has far more the air of *persifflage* provoked by the vanity of Pfaßius, than of a serious compliment to his sagacity and penetration. No injunction to secrecy, it is to be observed, is here given by Leibnitz to his correspondent.

the other. Now, by this single principle of the *Sufficient Reason*, may be demonstrated the being of a God, and all the other parts of Metaphysics or Natural Theology; and even, in some measure, those physical truths that are independent upon Mathematics, such as the Dynamical Principles, or the Principles of Forces.”

Some of the inferences deduced by Leibnitz from this almost gratuitous assumption are so paradoxical, that one cannot help wondering he was not a little staggered about its certainty. Not only was he led to conclude, that the mind is necessarily determined in all its elections by the influence of motives, insomuch that it would be impossible for it to make a choice between two things perfectly alike; but he had the boldness to extend this conclusion to the Deity, and to assert, that two things perfectly alike could not have been produced even by Divine Power. It was upon this ground that he rejected a *vacuum*, because all the parts of it would be perfectly like to each other; and that he also rejected the supposition of *atoms*, or similar particles of matter, and ascribed to each particle a *monad*, or active principle, by which it is discriminated from every other particle.¹ The application of his principle, however, on which he evidently valued himself the most, was that to which I have already alluded; the demonstrative evidence with which he conceived it to establish the impossibility of free-agency, not only in man, but in any other intelligent being;² a conclusion which, under whatever form of words it

¹ See Note (I.)

² The following comment on this part of the Leibnitzian system is from the pen of one of his greatest admirers, *Charles Bonnet*: “Cette Métaphysique transcendante deviendra un peu plus intelligible, si l’on fait attention, qu’en vertu du principe de la *raison suffisante*, tout est nécessairement lié dans l’univers. Toutes les Actions des Etres Simples sont harmoniques, ou subordonnées les unes aux autres. L’exercice actuel

may be disguised, is liable to every objection which can be urged against the system of Spinoza.

With respect to the principle from which these important consequences were deduced, it is observable, that it is stated by Leibnitz in terms so general and vague, as to extend to all the different departments of our knowledge; for he tells us, that there must be a *sufficient reason* for every *existence*, for every *event*, and for every *truth*. This use of the word *reason* is so extremely equivocal, that it is quite impossible to annex any precise idea to the proposition. Of this it is unnecessary to produce any other proof than the application which is here made of it to things so very different as *existences*, *events*, and *truths*; in all of which cases, it must of necessity have différent meanings. It would be a vain attempt, therefore, to combat the maxim in the form in which it is commonly appealed to: Nor, indeed, can we either adopt or reject it, without considering particularly how far it holds in the various instances to which it may be applied.

de l'activité d'une monade donnée, est déterminé par l'exercice actuel de l'activité des monades auxquelles elle correspond immédiatement. Cette correspondance continue d'un point quelconque de l'univers jusqu'à ses extrémités. Représentez-vous les ordres circulaires et concentriques qu'une pierre excite dans une eau dormante: Elles vont toujours en s'élargissant et en s'affaiblissant.

“ Mais, l'état actuel d'une monade est nécessairement déterminé par son état antécédent: Celui-ci par un état qui a précédé, et ainsi en remontant jusqu'à l'instant de la création.

* * * *

“ Ainsi le passé, le présent, et le futur ne forment dans la même monade qu'une seule chaîne. Notre philosophe disoit ingénieusement, que *le présent est toujours gros de l'avenir*.

“ Il disoit encore que l'Eternel Géomètre résolvoit sans cesse ce Problème; l'état d'une monade étant donné, en déterminer l'état passé présent, et futur de tout l'univers.” (*Bonnet*, Tom. VIII. p. 303, 304, 305.)

The multifarious discussions, however, of a physical, a metaphysical, and a theological nature,¹ necessarily involved in so detailed an examination, would, in the present times (even if this were a proper place for introducing them), be equally useless and uninteresting; the peculiar opinions of Leibnitz on most questions connected with these sciences having already fallen into complete neglect. But as the maxim still continues to be quoted by the latest advocates for the scheme of necessity, it may not be altogether superfluous to observe, that, when understood to refer to the changes that take place in the *material* universe, it coincides entirely with the common maxim, that “every change implies the operation of a *cause* ;” and that it is in consequence of its intuitive evidence in this particular case, that so many have been led to acquiesce in it, in the unlimited terms in which Leibnitz has announced it. One thing will be readily granted, that the maxim, when applied to the determinations of intelligent and moral *agents*, is not *quite* so obvious and indisputable, as when applied to the changes that take place in things altogether inanimate and passive.

What then, it may be asked, induced Leibnitz, in the enunciation of his maxim, to depart from the form in which it has generally been stated, and to substitute, instead of the word *cause*, the word *reason*, which is certainly not only the more unusual, but the more ambiguous expression of the

¹ Since the time of Leibnitz, the principle of the *sufficient reason* has been adopted by some mathematicians as a legitimate mode of reasoning in plane geometry ; in which case, the application made of it has been, in general, just and logical, notwithstanding the vague and loose manner in which it is expressed. In this science, however, the use of it can never be attended with much advantage ; except perhaps in demonstrating a few elementary truths (such as the 5th and 6th propositions of Euclid's first book), which are commonly established by a more circuitous process : And, even in these instances, the spirit of the reasoning might easily be preserved under a different form, much less exceptionable in point of phraseology.

two? Was it not evidently a perception of the impropriety of calling the motives from which we act the *causes* of our actions; or, at least of the inconsistency of this language with the common ideas and feelings of mankind? The word *reason* is *here* much less suspicious, and much more likely to pass current without examination. It was therefore with no small dexterity, that Leibnitz contrived to express his general principle in such a manner, that the impropriety of his language should be most apparent in that case in which the proposition is instantaneously admitted by every reader as self-evident; and to adapt it, in its most precise and definite shape, to the case in which it was in the greatest danger of undergoing a severe scrutiny. In this respect, he has managed his argument with more address than Collins, or Edwards, or Hume, all of whom have applied the maxim to *mind*, in the very same words in which it is usually applied to inanimate matter.

But on this article of Leibnitz's philosophy, which gave occasion to his celebrated controversy with Clarke, I shall have a more convenient opportunity to offer some strictures, when I come to take notice of another antagonist, more formidable still, whom Clarke had soon after to contend with on the same ground. The person I allude to is Anthony Collins; a writer certainly not once to be compared with Leibnitz, in the grasp of his intellectual powers; but who seems to have studied this particular question with greater attention and accuracy, and who is universally allowed to have defended his opinions concerning it in a manner far more likely to mislead the opinions of the multitude.

II. The same remark which has been already made on the principle of the *Sufficient Reason* may be extended to that of the *Law of Continuity*. In both instances the phraseology is so indeterminate, that it may be interpreted in various senses essentially different from each other; and, accordingly, it would be idle to argue against either principle

as a general theorem, without attending separately to the specialties of the manifold cases which it may be understood to comprehend. Where such a latitude is taken in the enunciation of a proposition, which, so far as it is true, must have been inferred from an induction of particulars, it is at least possible that, while it holds in *some* of its applications, it may yet be far from possessing any claim to that universality which seems necessarily to belong to it, when considered in the light of a metaphysical axiom, resting on its own intrinsic evidence.

Whether this vagueness of language was the effect of artifice, or of a real vagueness in the author's notions, may perhaps be doubted; but that it has contributed greatly to extend his reputation among a very numerous class of readers, may be confidently asserted. The possession of a general maxim, sanctioned by the authority of an illustrious name, and in which, as in those of the schoolmen, *more* seems to be *meant than meets the ear*, affords of itself no slight gratification to the vanity of many; nor is it inconvenient for a disputant, that the maxims to which he is to appeal should be stated in so dubious a shape, as to enable him, when pressed in an argument, to shift his ground at pleasure from one interpretation to another. The extraordinary popularity which, in our own times, the philosophy of Kant enjoyed, for a few years, among the countrymen of Leibnitz, may, in like manner, be in a great degree ascribed to the imposing aspect of his enigmatical oracles, and to the consequent facility of arguing without end, in defence of a system so transmutable and so elusive in its forms.

The extension, however, given to the *Law of Continuity*, in the later publications of Leibnitz, and still more by some of his successors, has been far greater than there is any reason to think was originally in the author's contemplation. It first occurred to him in the course of one of his physical controversies, and was probably suggested by the beautiful

exemplifications of it which occur in pure geometry. At that time it does not appear that he had the slightest idea of its being susceptible of any application to the objects of natural history ; far less to the succession of events in the intellectual and moral worlds. The supposition of bodies *perfectly hard*, having been shown to be inconsistent with two of his leading doctrines, *that* of the constant maintenance of the same quantity of force in the Universe, and *that* of the proportionality of forces to the squares of the velocities,—he found himself reduced to the necessity of asserting, that all changes are produced by insensible gradations, so as to render it impossible for a body to have its state changed from motion to rest, or from rest to motion, without passing through all the intermediate states of velocity. From this assumption he argued, with much ingenuity, that the existence of atoms, or of perfectly hard bodies, is impossible ; because, if two of them should meet with equal and opposite motions, they would necessarily stop at once, in violation of the *law of continuity*. It would, perhaps, have been still more logical, had he argued against the universality of a law so gratuitously assumed, from its incompatibility with an hypothesis, which, whether true or false, certainly involves nothing either contradictory or improbable : but as this inversion of the argument would have undermined some of the fundamental principles of his physical system, he chose rather to adopt the other alternative, and to announce the *law of continuity* as a metaphysical truth, which admitted of no exception whatever. The facility with which this *law* has been adopted by subsequent philosophers is not easily explicable ; more especially, as it has been maintained by many who reject those physical errors, in defence of which Leibnitz was first led to advance it.

One of the earliest, and certainly the most illustrious, of all the partisans and defenders of this principle, was John Bernouilli, whose discourse on motion first appeared at Paris in

1727, having been previously communicated to the Royal Academy of Sciences, in 1724 and 1726.¹ It was from this period it began to attract the general attention of the learned; although many years were yet to elapse, before it was to acquire that authority which it now possesses among our most eminent mathematicians.

Mr. Maclaurin, whose *Memoir on the Percussion of Bodies* gained the prize from the Royal Academy of Sciences, in 1724, continued from that time, till his death, the steady opposer of this new law. In his *Treatise of Fluxions*, published in 1742, he observes, that “the existence of hard bodies void of elasticity has been rejected for the sake of what is called the *Law of Continuity*; a law which has been supposed to be general, without sufficient ground.”² And still more explicitly, in his *Posthumous Account of Newton’s Philosophical Discoveries*, he complains of those who “have rejected hard bodies as impossible, from far-fetched and metaphysical considerations;” proposing to his adversaries this unanswerable

¹ “En effet (says Bernouilli), un pareil principe de dureté (the supposition to wit of bodies perfectly hard) ne sçauroit exister; c’est une chimère qui répugne à cette loi générale que la nature observe constamment dans toutes ses opérations; je parle de cet ordre immuable et perpétuel établi depuis la creation de l’univers, qu’on peut appeller LOI DE CONTINUITE, en vertu de laquelle tout ce qui s’exécute, s’exécute par des degrés infiniment petits. Il semble que le bon sens dicte, qu’aucun changement ne peut se faire par saut; *natura non operatur per saltum*; rien ne peut passer d’une extrémité à l’autre, sans passer par tous les degrés du milieu,” &c. The continuation of this passage (which I have not room to quote) is curious, as it suggests an argument, in proof of the *law of continuity*, from the principle of the *sufficient reason*.

It may be worth while to observe here, that though, in the above quotation, Bernouilli speaks of the *law of continuity* as an arbitrary arrangement of the Creator, he represents, in the preceding paragraph, the idea of perfectly hard bodies, as involving a manifest contradiction.

² Maclaurin’s *Fluxions*, Vol. II. p. 438.

question, "Upon what grounds is the *law of continuity* assumed as an universal law of nature?"¹

In the speculations hitherto mentioned, the *law of continuity* is applied merely to such *successive* events in the material world as are connected together by the relation of *cause and effect*; and, indeed, *chiefly* to the changes which take place in the state of bodies with respect to *motion and rest*. But in the philosophy of Leibnitz, we find the same *law* appealed to as an indisputable principle in all his various researches, physical, metaphysical and theological. He extends it with the same confidence to mind as to matter, urging it as a demonstrative proof, in opposition to Locke, that the soul never ceases to think even in sleep or in a *deliquium*; ² nay, inferring from it

¹ Nearly to the same purpose Mr. Robins, a mathematician and philosopher of the highest eminence, expresses himself thus: "M. Bernouilli (in his *Discours sur les Lois de la Communication du Mouvement*), in order to prove that there are no bodies perfectly hard and inflexible, lays it down as an immutable law of nature, that no body can pass from motion to rest instantaneously, or without having its volocity gradually diminished. That this is a law of nature, M. Bernouilli thinks is evident from that principle, *Natura non operatur per saltum*, and from good sense. BUT HOW GOOD SENSE CAN, OF ITSELF, WITHOUT EXPERIMENT, DETERMINE ANY OF THE LAWS OF NATURE, IS TO ME VERY ASTONISHING. Indeed, from any thing M. Bernouilli has said, it would have been altogether as conclusive to have begun at the other end, and have disputed, that no body can pass instantaneously from motion to rest; because it is an immutable law of nature that all bodies shall be flexible." (Robins, Vol. II. p. 174, 175.)

In quoting these passages, I would not wish to be understood as calling in question the universality of the *Law of Continuity* in the phenomena of moving bodies; a point on which I am not led by the subject of this discourse to offer any opinion; but on which I intend to hazard some remarks in a Note at the end of it. See Note (K.) All that I would here assert is, that it is a *law* the truth of which can be inferred only by an induction from the phenomena; and to which, accordingly, we are not entitled to say that there cannot possibly exist any exceptions.

² "Je tiens que l'âme, et même le corps n'est jamais sans action, et que l'âme n'est jamais sans quelque perception, même en dormant, on a quelque sentiment confus et sombre du lieu où l'on

the impossibility that, in the cause of any animated being, there should be such a thing as *death*, in the literal sense of that word.¹ It is by no means probable that the author was at all aware, when he first introduced this principle into the theory of motion, how far it was to lead him in his researches concerning other questions of greater moment; nor does it appear that it attracted much notice from the learned, but as a new *mechanical* axiom, till a considerable time after his death.

Charles Bonnet of Geneva, a man of unquestionable talents and of most exemplary worth, was, as far as I know, the first who entered fully into the views of Leibnitz on this point; perceiving how inseparably the law of continuity (as well as the principle of the sufficient reason) was interwoven with his scheme of universal concatenation and mechanism; and inferring from thence not only all the paradoxical corollaries deduced from it by its author, but some equally bold conclusions of his own, which Leibnitz either did not foresee in their full extent, or to which the course of his inquiries did not particularly attract his attention. The most remarkable of these conclusions was, that all the various beings which compose the universe, form a scale descending downwards without any chasm or *saltus*, from the Deity to the simplest forms of unorganised matter;² a proposition not altogether new in the

est, et d'autres choses. *Mais quand l'expérience ne le confirmeroit pas, je crois qu'il y en a démonstration.* C'est à peu pres comme on ne scauroit prouver absolument par les expériences, s'il n'y a point de vuide dans l'espace, et s'il n'y a point de repos dans la matière. Et cependant ces questions me paroissent décidées démonstrativement aussi bien qu'à M. Locke." (Leib. *Op.* Tome II. p. 220.)

¹ See Note (L.)

² Leibnitz admettoit comme un principe fondamental de sa sublime philosophie: qu'il n'y a jamais de sauts dans la nature, et que tout est continu ou nuancé dans le physique et dans le moral. C'étoit sa fameuse *Loi de Continuité*, qu'il croyoit retrouver encore dans les mathématiques, et c'avoit été cette loi qui

history of philosophy, but which I do not know that any writer before Bonnet had ventured to assert as a metaphysical and necessary truth. With what important limitations and exceptions it must be received, even when confined to the comparative anatomy of animals, has been fully demonstrated by Cuvier ;¹ and it is of material consequence to remark, that these exceptions, how few soever, to a *metaphysical* principle, are not less fatal to its truth than if they exceeded in number the instances which are quoted in support of the general rule.²

lui avoit inspiré la singulière prédiction dont je parlois.”*
 “Tous les êtres, disoit il, ne forment qu’une seule chaîne, dans laquelle les différentes classes, comme autant d’anneaux, tiennent si étroitement les unes aux autres, qu’il est impossible aux sens et à l’imagination de fixer précisément le point où quelque une commence ou finit : toutes les espèces qui bordent ou qui occupent, pour ainsi dire, les régions d’inflexion, et de rebroussement, doivent être équivoques et douées de caractères qui peuvent se rapporter aux espèces voisins également. Ainsi, l’existence des zoophytes ou *Plant-Animaux* n’a rien de monstrueux ; mais il est même convenable à l’ordre de la nature qu’il y en ait. Et telle est la force du principe de continuité chez moi, que non seulement je ne serois point étonné d’apprendre, qu’on eut trouvé des êtres, qui par rapport à plusieurs propriétés, par exemple, celle de se nourrir ou de se multiplier, puissent passer pour des végétaux à aussi bon droit que pour des animaux,...J’en serois si peu étonné dis-je, que même je suis convaincu qu’il doit y en avoir de tels, que l’Histoire Naturelle parviendra peut-être à connaître un jour,” &c. &c. (*Contemplation de la Nature*, pp. 341, 342.)

Bonnet, in the sequel of this passage, speaks of the words of Leibnitz, as a prediction of the discovery of the *Polypus*, deduced from the *Metaphysical* principle of the Law of Continuity. But would it not be more philosophical to regard it as a query founded on the *analogy* of nature, as made known to us by experience and observation ?

¹ *Leçons d’Anatomie Comparée.*

² While Bonnet was thus employing his ingenuity in generalizing, still farther than his predecessors had done, the law of continuity, one of the most distinguished of his fellow citizens, with whom he appears to have been connected in the closest

* La prédiction de la découverte des Polypes.

At a period somewhat later, an attempt has been made to connect the *same law of continuity* with the history of human improvement, and more particularly with the progress of invention in the sciences and arts. Helvetius is the most noted writer in whom I have observed this last extension of the Leibnitzian principle; and I have little doubt, from his known opinions, that, when it occurred to him, he conceived it to afford a new illustration of the scheme of necessity, and of the mechanical concatenation of all the phenomena of human life. Arguing in support of his favourite paradox concerning the original equality of all men in point of mental capacity, he represents the successive advances made by different individuals in the career of discovery, as so many imperceptible or infinitesimal steps, each individual surpassing his predecessor by a trifle, till at length nothing is

and most confidential friendship (the very ingenious M. Le Sage), was led, in the course of his researches concerning the physical cause of gravitation, to deny the existence of the law, even in the descent of heavy bodies. "The action of gravity (according to him) is *not* continuous." In other words, "each of its impressions is finite; and the interval of time which separates it from the following impression is of a finite duration." Of this proposition he offers a proof, which he considers as demonstrative; and thence deduces the following very paradoxical corollary, That "Projectiles do not move in curvilinear paths, but in rectilinear polygons."—C'est ainsi (he adds) qu'un prés, qui vû de près se trouve couvert de parties vertes réellement séparées, offre cependant aux personnes qui le regardent de loin, la sensation d'une verdure continuë: Et qu'un corps poli, auquel le microscope decouvre mille solutions de continuité paroît à l'oeil nu, posséder une continuité parfaite."

"Généralement, le simple bon sens, qui veut, qu'on suspende son jugement sur ce qu'on ignore, et que l'on ne tranche pas hardiment sur la non-existence de ce qui échappe à nos sens, auroit dû empêcher des gens qui s'appeloient philosophes de décider si dogmatiquement, la continuité réelle, de ce qui avoit une continuité apparente; et la non-existence des intervalles qu'ils n'apercevoient pas." *Essai de Chymie Mécanique*. Couronné en 1758, par l'Académie de Rouën; Imprimé à Genève, 1761. pp. 94, 95, 96.)

wanting but an additional mind (not superior to the others in natural powers) to combine together, and to turn to its own account, their accumulated labours. "It is upon *this* mind," he observes, "that the world is always ready to bestow the attribute of genius. From the tragedies of *The Passion*, to the poets Hardy and Rotrou, and to the *Mariamne* of Tristram, the French theatre was always acquiring successively an infinite number of inconsiderable improvements. Corneille was born at a moment, when the addition he made to the art could not fail to form an epoch; and accordingly Corneille is universally regarded as a Genius. I am far from wishing," Helvetius adds, "to detract from the glory of this great poet. I wish only to prove, that *Nature never proceeds PER SALTUM, and that the Law of Continuity is always exactly observed*. The remarks, therefore, now made on the dramatic art, may also be applied to the sciences which rest on observation."¹ (*De l'Esprit*, Dis. IV. Chap. 1.)

¹ It may, perhaps, be alleged, that the above allusion to the *Law of Continuity* was introduced merely for the sake of illustration, and that the author did not mean his words to be strictly interpreted; but this remark will not be made by those who are acquainted with the philosophy of Helvetius.

Let me add, that, in selecting Corneille as the only exemplification of this theory, Helvetius has been singularly unfortunate. It would have been difficult to have named any other modern poet, in whose works, when compared with those of his immediate predecessors, the *Law of Continuity* has been more remarkably violated. "Corneille (says a most judicious French critic) est, pour ainsi dire, de notre tems; mais ses contemporains n'en sont pas. *Le Cid*, *les Horaces*, *Cinna* *Poliucte*, forment le commencement de cette chaîne brillante qui réunit notre littérature actuelle de celle du règne de Richelieu et de la minorité de Louis XIV.; mais autour de ces points lumineux règne encore une nuit profonde; leur éclat les rapproche en apparence de nos yeux; le reste, repoussé dans l'obscurité, semble bien loin de nous. Pour nous Corneille est moderne, et Rotrou ancien," &c. (For detailed illustrations and proofs of these positions, see a slight but masterly historical sketch of the French Theatre, by M. Suard.)

With this last extension of the *Law of Continuity*, as well as with that of Bonnet, a careless reader is the more apt to be dazzled, as there is a large mixture in both of unquestionable truth. The mistake of the ingenious writers lay in pushing to *extreme cases* a doctrine, which, when kept within certain limits, is not only solid but important ; a mode of reasoning, which, although it may be always safely followed out in pure Mathematics (where the principles on which we proceed are mere definitions), is a never-failing source of error in all the other sciences ; and which, when practically applied to the concerns of life, may be regarded as an infallible symptom of an understanding better fitted for the subtle contentions of the schools than for those average estimates of what is expedient and practicable in the conduct of affairs, which form the chief elements of political sagacity and of moral wisdom.¹

¹ Locke has fallen into a train of thought very similar to that of Bonnet, concerning the *Scale of Beings* ; but has expressed himself with far greater caution ;—stating it modestly as an inference deduced from an induction of particulars, not as the result of any abstract or metaphysical principle. (See Locke's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 101.) In one instance, indeed, he avails himself of an allusion, which, at first sight, may appear to favour the extension of the mathematical *Law of Continuity* to the works of creation ; but it is evident, from the context, that he meant this allusion merely as a popular illustration of a fact in Natural History ; not as the rigorous enunciation of a theorem applicable alike to all truths, mathematical, physical, and moral. “ It is a hard matter to say where sensible and rational begin, and where insensible and irrational end ; and who is there quick-sighted enough to determine precisely, which is the lowest species of living things, and which is the first of those who have no life ? Things, as far as we can observe, lessen and augment, as the quantity does in a *regular cone*, where, though there be a manifest odds betwixt the bigness of the diameter at a remote distance, yet the difference between the upper and under, where they touch one another, is hardly discernible.” (*Ibid.*)

See some Reflections on this speculation of Locke's in the *Spectator*, No. 519.

If on these two celebrated principles of Leibnitz, I have enlarged at greater length than may appear to some of my readers to be necessary, I must remind them, *1st*, Of the illustration they afford of what Locke has so forcibly urged with respect to the danger of adopting, upon the faith of reasonings *a priori*, metaphysical conclusions concerning the laws by which the universe is governed: *2dly*, Of the proof they exhibit of the strong bias of the human mind, even in the present advanced stage of experimental knowledge, to grasp at general maxims, without a careful examination of the grounds on which they rest; and of that less frequent, but not less unfortunate bias, which has led some of our most eminent mathematicians to transfer to sciences, resting ultimately on an appeal to *facts*, those habits of thinking which have been formed amidst the hypothetical abstractions of pure geometry: *Lastly*, Of the light they throw on the mighty influence which the name and authority of Leibnitz has, for more than a century past, exercised over the strongest and acutest understandings in the most enlightened countries of Europe.

It would be improper to close these reflections on the philosophical speculations of Leibnitz, without taking some notice of his very ingenious and original thoughts on the etymological study of languages, considered as a guide to our conclusions concerning the origin and migrations of different tribes of our species. These thoughts were published in 1710, in the *Memoirs* of the Berlin Academy; and form the first article of the first volume of that justly celebrated collection. I do not recollect any author of an earlier date, who seems to have been completely aware of the important consequences to which the prosecution of this inquiry is likely to lead; nor, indeed, was much progress made in it by any of Leibnitz's successors, till towards the end of the last century; when it became a favourite object of pursuit to some very learned and ingenious men, both in

France, Germany, and England. *Now*, however, when our knowledge of the globe, and of its inhabitants, is so wonderfully enlarged by commerce, and by conquest; and when so great advances have been made in the acquisition of languages, the names of which, till very lately, were unheard of in this quarter of the world;—there is every reason to hope for a series of farther discoveries, strengthening progressively, by the multiplication of their mutual points of contact, the common evidence of their joint results; and tending more and more to dissipate the darkness in which the primeval history of our race is involved. It is a field, of which only detached corners have hitherto been explored; and in which, it may be confidently presumed, that unthought of treasures still lie hid, to reward sooner or later the researches of our posterity.¹

My present subject does not lead me to speak of the mathematical and physical researches, which have associated so closely the name of Leibnitz with that of Newton, in the history of modern science; of the inexhaustible treasures of his erudition, both classical and scholastic; of his vast and manifold contributions towards the elucidation of German antiquities and of Roman jurisprudence; or of those theological controversies, in which, while he combated with one hand the enemies of revelation, he defended, with the other, the orthodoxy of his own dogmas against the profoundest and most learned divines of Europe. Nor would I have digressed so far as to allude here to these particulars, were it not for the unparalleled example they display, of what a vigorous and versatile genius, seconded by habits of persevering industry, may accomplish, within the short span of human life. Even the relaxations with which he was accustomed to fill up his moments of leisure, partook of the general character of his more serious engage-

¹ See Note (M.)

ments. By early and long habit, he had acquired a singular facility in the composition of Latin verses; and he seems to have delighted in loading his muse with new fetters of his own contrivance, in addition to those imposed by the laws of classical prosody.¹ The number, besides, of his literary correspondents was immense; including all that was most illustrious in Europe: and the rich materials everywhere scattered over his letters are sufficient of themselves to show, that his amusements consisted rather in a change of objects, than in a suspension of his mental activity. Yet while we admire these stupendous monuments of his intellectual energy, we must not forget (if I may borrow the language of Gibbon) that “even the powers of Leibnitz were dissipated by the multiplicity of his pursuits. He attempted more than he could finish; he designed more than he could execute; his imagination was too easily satisfied with a bold and rapid glance on the subject which he was impatient to leave; and he may be compared to those heroes whose empire has been lost in the ambition of universal conquest.”²

From some expressions which Leibnitz has occasionally dropped, I think it probable, that he himself became sensible, as he advanced in life, that his time might have been more profitably employed, had his studies been more con-

¹ A remarkable instance of this is mentioned by himself in one of his letters. “Annos natus tredecim una die trecentos versus hexametros effudi, sine elisione omnes, quod hoc fieri facillè posse fortè affirmassem.” (Leib. *Op.* Tom. V. p. 304.) He also amused himself occasionally with writing verses in German and in French.

² May I presume to remark farther, that the native powers of Leibnitz’s mind, astonishing and preternatural as they certainly were, seem sometimes oppressed and overlaid under the weight of his still more astonishing erudition? The influence of his scholastic reading is more peculiarly apparent in warping his judgment, and clouding his reason, on all questions connected with Metaphysical Theology.

fined in their aim. "If the whole earth (he has observed on one occasion) had continued to be of one language and of one speech, human life might be considered as 'extended beyond its present term, by the addition of all that part of it which is devoted to the acquisition of dead and foreign tongues. Many other branches of knowledge, too, may, in this respect, be classed with the languages; such as Positive Laws, Ceremonies, the Styles of Courts, and a great proportion of what is called *critical erudition*. The utility of all these arises merely from opinion; nor is there to be found, in the innumerable volumes that have been written to illustrate them, a hundredth part, which contains anything subservient to the happiness or improvement of mankind."

The most instructive lesson, however, to be drawn from the history of Leibnitz, is the incompetency of the most splendid gifts of the understanding, to advance essentially the interests either of Metaphysical or of Ethical Science, unless accompanied with that rare devotion to truth, which may be regarded, if not as the basis, at least as one of the most indispensable elements, of moral genius. The chief attraction to the study of philosophy, in *his* mind, seems to have been (what many French critics have considered as a chief source of the charms of the imitative arts) the pride of *conquering difficulties*: a feature of his character which he had probably in his own eye, when he remarked (not without some degree of conscious vanity), as a peculiarity in the turn or cast of his intellect, that to *him* "all difficult things were easy, and all easy things difficult."¹ Hence the disregard manifested in his writings to the simple and obvious conclusions of experience and common sense; and the perpetual effort to unriddle mysteries over which an impe-

¹ "Sentio paucos esse mei characteris, et omnia facilia mihi difficilia, omnia contra difficilia mihi facilia esse."—Leib. *Op.* Tom. VI. p. 302.

netrable veil is drawn. “Scilicet sublime et erectum ingenium, pulchritudinem ac speciem excelsæ magnæque gloriæ vehementius quam caute appetebat.” It is to be regretted, that the sequel of this fine eulogy does not equally apply to him. “Mox mitigavit ratio et ætas; *retinuitque, quod est difficillimum, et in sapientia modum.*”¹ How happily does this last expression characterize the temperate wisdom of Locke, when contrasted with that towering, but impotent ambition, which, in the Theories of Optimism and of Pre-established Harmony, seemed to realize the fabled revolt of the giants against the sovereignty of the gods!

After all, a similarity may be traced between these two great men in *one* intellectual weakness common to both; a facility in the admission of facts, stamped sufficiently (as we should *now* think) by their own intrinsic evidence, with the marks of incredibility. The observation has been often made with respect to Locke; but it would be difficult to find in Locke’s writings, any thing so absurd as an account gravely transmitted by Leibnitz to the Abbé de St. Pierre, and by him communicated to the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, of a dog who spoke.² No person liberally educated could, I believe, be found at present in any *Protestant* country of Christendom, capable of such credulity. By what causes so extraordinary a revolution in the minds of men has been effected, within the short space of a hundred years, I must not here stop to inquire. Much, I apprehend, must be ascribed to our enlarged knowledge of nature, and more particularly to those scientific voyages and travels which have annihilated so many of the prodigies which exercised the wonder and subdued the reason of our ancestors. But, in whatever manner the revolution is to be explained, there can be no doubt that this growing dispo-

¹ Tacitus, *Agric.*

² See Note (N.)

sition to weigh scrupulously the *probability* of alleged *facts* against the faith due to the testimonies brought to attest them, and, even in some cases, against the apparent evidence of our own senses, enters largely and essentially into the composition of that philosophical *spirit* or temper, which so strongly distinguishes the eighteenth century from all those which preceded it.¹ It is no small consolation to reflect, that some important maxims of good sense have been thus familiarized to the most ordinary understandings, which, at so very recent a period, failed in producing their due effect on two of the most powerful minds in Europe.

On reviewing the foregoing paragraphs, I am almost tempted to retract part of what I have written, when I reflect on the benefits which the world has derived even from the *errors* of Leibnitz. It has been well and justly said, that “every *desideratum* is an imperfect discovery;” to which it may be added, that every new problem which is started, and still more every attempt, however abortive, towards its solution, strikes out a new path, which must sooner or later lead to the truth. If the problem be solvable, a solution will in due time be obtained: If insolvable, it will soon be abandoned as hopeless by general consent; and the legitimate field of scientific research will become more fertile, in proportion as a more accurate survey of its boundaries adapts it better to the limited resources of the cultivators.

In this point of view, what individual in modern times can be compared to Leibnitz! To how many of those researches, which still usefully employ the talents and industry of the learned, did he not point out and open the way! From how many more did he not warn the wise to withhold their curiosity, by his bold and fruitless attempts to burst the barriers of the invisible word!

¹ See Note (O.)

The best *elogé* of Leibnitz is furnished by the literary history of the eighteenth century ;—a history which, whoever takes the pains to compare with his works, and with his epistolary correspondence, will find reason to doubt, whether, at the singular era when he appeared, he could have more accelerated the advancement of knowledge by the concentration of his studies, than he has actually done by the universality of his aims ; and whether he does not afford one of the few instances to which the words of the poet may literally be applied :

“ Si non errasset, fecerat ille minus.”¹

SECTION III.

ON THE METAPHYSICAL SPECULATIONS OF NEWTON AND CLARKE.—DIGRESSION WITH RESPECT TO THE SYSTEM OF SPINOZA.—COLLINS AND JONATHAN EDWARDS.—ANXIETY OF BOTH TO RECONCILE THE SCHEME OF NECESSITY WITH MAN'S MORAL AGENCY.—DEPARTURE OF SOME LATER NECESSITARIANS FROM THEIR VIEWS.²

THE foregoing review of the philosophical writings of Locke and of Leibnitz naturally leads our attention, in the

¹ See Note (P.)

² In conformity to the plan announced in the preface to this *Dissertation*, I confine myself to those authors whose opinions have had a marked and general influence on the subsequent history of philosophy ; passing over a multitude of other names well worthy to be recorded in the annals of metaphysical science. Among these, I shall only mention the name of Boyle, to whom the world is indebted, beside some very acute remarks and many fine illustrations of his own upon metaphysical questions of the highest moment, for the philosophical arguments in defence of religion, which have added so much lustre to the names of Derham and Bentley ; and, far above both, to that of

next place, to those of our illustrious countrymen Newton and Clarke; the former of whom has exhibited, in his *Principia* and *Optics*, the most perfect exemplifications which have yet appeared, of the cautious logic recommended by Bacon and Locke; while the other, in defending against the assaults of Leibnitz the metaphysical principles on which the Newtonian philosophy proceeds, has been led, at the same time, to vindicate the authority of various other truths, of still higher importance, and more general interest.

The chief subjects of dispute between Leibnitz and Clarke, so far as the principles of the Newtonian philosophy are concerned, have been long ago settled, to the entire satisfaction of the learned world. The *monads*, and

Clarke.* The *remarks* and *illustrations*, which I refer to, are to be found in his *Inquiry into the Vulgar Notion of Nature*. and in his *Essay, inquiring whether, and how, a Naturalist should consider Final Causes*. Both of these tracts display powers which might have placed their author on a level with Descartes and Locke, had not his taste and inclination determined him more strongly to other pursuits. I am inclined to think, that neither of them is so well known as were to be wished. I do not even recollect to have seen it anywhere noticed, that some of the most striking and beautiful instances of design in the order of the material world, which occur in the Sermons preached at Boyle's *Lecture*, are borrowed from the works of the founder.†

Notwithstanding, however, these great merits, he has written too little on such abstract subjects to entitle him to a place among English metaphysicians; nor has he, like Newton, started any leading thoughts which have since given a new direction to the studies of metaphysical inquirers. From the slight specimens he has left, there is reason to conclude, that his mind was still more happily turned than that of Newton, for the prosecution of that branch of science to which their contemporary Locke was then beginning to invite the attention of the public.

* To the English reader it is unnecessary to observe, that I allude to the Sermons preached at the Lecture founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle.

† Those instances, more especially, which are drawn from the anatomical structure of animals, and the adaptation of their perceptive organs to the habits of life for which they are destined.

the *plenum*, and the *pre-established harmony* of Leibnitz, already rank, in the public estimation, with the vortices of Descartes, and the plastic nature of Cudworth; while the theory of gravitation prevails everywhere over all opposition; and (as Mr. Smith remarks) “has advanced to the acquisition of the most universal empire that was ever established in philosophy.” On these points, therefore, I have only to refer my readers to the collection published by Dr. Clarke, in 1717, of the controversial papers which passed between him and Leibnitz during the two preceding years; a correspondence equally curious and instructive; and which, it is to be lamented, that the death of Leibnitz in 1716 prevented from being longer continued.¹

Although Newton does not appear to have devoted much of his time to Metaphysical researches, yet the general spirit of his physical investigations has had a great, though indirect, influence on the metaphysical studies of his successors. It is justly and profoundly remarked by Mr. Hume, that “while Newton *seemed* to draw off the veil from some of the mysteries of nature, he showed, at the same time, the imperfections of the mechanical philosophy, and thereby restored her ultimate secrets to that obscurity in which

¹ From a letter of Leibnitz to M. Remond de Montmort, it appears that he considered Newton, and not Clarke, as his real antagonist in this controversy. “M. Clarke, ou plutôt M. Newton, dont M. Clarke soutient les dogmes, est en dispute avec moi sur la philosophie.” (Leib. *Op.* Tom. V. p. 33.) From another letter to the same correspondent we learn, that Leibnitz aimed at nothing less than the complete overthrow of the Newtonian philosophy; and that it was chiefly to his grand principle of the *sufficient reason* that he trusted for the accomplishment of this object. “J’ai réduit l’état de notre dispute à ce grand axiome, que rien n’existe ou n’arrive sans qu’il y ait une raison suffisante, pourquoi il en est plutôt ainsi qu’autrement. S’il continue à me le nier, où en sera sa sincérité? S’il me l’accorde, adieu le vuide, les atomes, et toute la philosophie de M. Newton.” (Ibid.) See also a letter from Leibnitz to M. des Maizeaux in the same volume of his works, p. 39.

they ever did, and ever will remain." In this way, his discoveries have co-operated powerfully with the reasonings of Locke in producing a general conviction of the inadequacy of our faculties to unriddle those sublime enigmas on which Descartes, Malebranche, and Leibnitz, had so recently wasted their strength, and which, in the ancient world, were regarded as the only fit objects of philosophical curiosity. It is chiefly too since the time of Newton, that the ontology and pneumatology of the dark ages have been abandoned for inquiries resting on the solid basis of experience and analogy; and that philosophers have felt themselves emboldened by his astonishing discoveries concerning the more distant parts of the material universe, to argue from the known to the unknown parts of the moral world. So completely has the prediction been verified which he himself hazarded, in the form of a query, at the end of his *Optics*, that "if natural philosophy should continue to be improved in its various branches, the bounds of moral philosophy would be enlarged also."

How far the peculiar cast of Newton's genius qualified him for prosecuting successfully the study of Mind, he has not afforded us sufficient *data* for judging; but such was the admiration with which his transcendent powers as a Mathematician and Natural Philosopher were universally regarded, that the slightest of his hints on other subjects have been eagerly seized upon as indisputable axioms, though sometimes with little other evidence in their favour but the supposed sanction of his authority.¹ The part of his works, however, which chiefly led me to connect his name with that of Clarke, is a passage in the *Scho-*

¹ Witness Hartley's *Physiological Theory of the Mind*, founded on a query in Newton's *Optics*; and a long list of theories in medicine, grafted on a hint thrown out in the same query, in the form of a modest conjecture.

lium annexed to his *Principia*,¹ which may be considered as the germ of the celebrated argument *a priori* for the existence of God, which is commonly, though, I apprehend, not justly, regarded as the most important of all Clarke's contributions to Metaphysical Philosophy. I shall quote the passage in Newton's own words, to the oracular conciseness of which no English version can do justice.

"Æternus est, et infinitus, omnipotens et omnisciens; id est, durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum. . . . Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium, sed durat et adest. Durat semper et adest ubique, et existendo semper et ubi-

¹ This *scholium*, it is to be observed, first appeared at the end of the second edition of the *Principia*, printed at Cambridge in 1713. The former edition, published at London in 1687, has no *scholium* annexed to it. From a passage, however, in a letter of Newton's to Dr. Bentley (dated 1692), it seems probable, that as far back, at least, as that period, he had thoughts of attempting a proof *a priori* of the existence of God. After some new illustrations, drawn from his own discoveries, of the common argument from *final causes*, he thus concludes: "There is yet *another* argument for a Deity, which I take to be a very strong one; but, till the principles on which it is grounded are better received, I think it more advisable to let it sleep." (*Four letters from Sir I. Newton to Dr. Bentley*, p. 11. London, Dodsley, 1756.)

It appears from this passage, that Newton had no intention, like his predecessor Descartes, to supersede, by any new argument of his own for the existence of God, the common one drawn from the consideration of *final causes*; and, therefore, nothing could be more uncandid than the following sarcasm pointed by Pope at the laudable attempts of his two countrymen to *add* to the evidence of this conclusion, by deducing it from *other* principles:

"Let others creep by timid steps and slow,
On plain experience lay foundations low,
By common sense to common knowledge bred,
And last to Nature's cause thro' Nature led:
We nobly take the high *priori*-road,
And reason downwards till we doubt of God."

That Pope had Clarke in his eye when he wrote these lines. will not be doubted by those who recollect the various other oc-

que durationem et spatium constituit.”¹ Proceeding on these principles, Dr. Clarke argued, that, as immensity and eternity (which force themselves irresistibly on our belief as *necessary* existences, or, in other words, as existences of which the annihilation is impossible) are not *substances*, but *attributes*, the immense and eternal Being, whose attributes they are, must exist of necessity also. The existence of God, therefore, according to Clarke, is a truth that follows with demonstrative evidence from those conceptions of space and time which are inseparable from the human mind. . . . “These (says Dr. Reid) are the speculations of men of superior genius; but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination in a region beyond the limits of the human understanding, I am at a loss to determine.” After this candid acknowledg-

casions in which he has stepped out of his way, to vent an impotent spleen against this excellent person.

“Let Clarke live half his life the poor’s support,
But let him live the other half at court.”

And again :

“Even in an ornament its place remark ;
Nor in a hermitage set Dr. Clarke :”

in which last couplet there is a manifest allusion to the bust of Clarke, placed in a hermitage by Queen Caroline, together with those of Newton, Boyle, Locke, and Wollaston. See some fine verses on these busts in a poem called the *Grotto*, by Matthew Green.

¹ Thus translated by Dr Clarke, “God is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient ; that is, he endures from everlasting to everlasting, and is present from infinity to infinity. He is not eternity or infinity, but eternal and infinite. He is not duration or space, but he endures and is present. He endures always, and is present everywhere, and by existing always and everywhere, constitutes duration and space.” (See Clarke’s *Fourth Reply to Leibnitz*.)

ment from Dr. Reid, I need not be ashamed to confess my own doubts and difficulties on the same question.¹

But although the argument, as stated by Clarke, does not carry complete satisfaction to my mind, I think it must be granted that there is something peculiarly wonderful and overwhelming in those conceptions of immensity and eternity, which it is not less impossible to banish from our thoughts, than the consciousness of our own existence. Nay, further, I think that these conceptions are very intimately connected with the fundamental principles of Natural Religion. For when once we have established, from the evidences of design everywhere manifested around us, the existence of an intelligent and powerful *cause*, we are unavoidably led to apply to this *cause* our conceptions of *immensity* and *eternity*, and to conceive Him as filling the infinite extent of both with his presence and with his power. Hence we associate with the idea of God those awful impressions which are naturally produced by the idea of infinite space, and perhaps still more by the idea of endless duration. Nor is this all. It is from the immensity of space that the notion of infinity is originally derived; and it is hence that we transfer the expression, by a sort of metaphor, to other subjects. When we speak, therefore, of *infinite* power, wisdom, and goodness, our notions, if not wholly borrowed from space, are at least greatly aided by this analogy; so that the conceptions of Immensity and Eternity, if they do not of themselves *demonstrate* the existence of God, yet necessarily enter into the ideas we form of his nature and attributes.

To these various considerations it may be added, that the notion of *necessary existence* which we derive from the con-

¹ An argument substantially the same with this for the existence of God, is hinted at very distinctly by Cudworth, *Intellect. System*, Chap. V. sect. 3, 4. Also by Dr. Henry More, *Enchir. Metaph.* Cap. 3. sect. 8. See Mosheim's *Trans. of Cudworth*, Tom. II. p. 356.

templation of Space and of Time, renders the same notion, when applied to the Supreme Being, much more easy to be apprehended than it would otherwise be.

It is not, therefore, surprising, that Newton and Clarke should have fallen into that train of thought which encouraged them to attempt a demonstration of the being of God from our conceptions of Immensity and Eternity ; and still less is it to be wondered at, that, in pursuing this lofty argument, they should have soared into regions where they were lost in the clouds.

I have said above, that Clarke's demonstration seems to have been suggested to him by a passage in Newton's *Scholium*. It is, however, more than probable that he had himself struck into a path very nearly approaching to it, at a much earlier period of his life. The following anecdote of his childhood, related, upon his own authority, by his learned and authentic, though, in many respects, weak and visionary biographer (Whiston), exhibits an interesting example of an anomalous developement of the powers of reflection and abstraction, at an age when, in ordinary cases, the attention is wholly engrossed with sensible objects. Such an inversion of the common process of nature in unfolding our different faculties, is perhaps one of the rarest phenomena in the intellectual world ; and, wherever it occurs, may be regarded as strongly symptomatic of something peculiar and decided in the philosophical character of the individual :

“ One of his parents,” says Whiston, “ asked him when he was very young, whether God could do every thing ? He answered, Yes ! He was asked again, Whether God could tell a lie ? He answered, No ! And he understood the question to suppose, that this was the only thing that God could not do ; nor durst he say, so young was he then, that he thought there was any thing else which God could not do ; while yet, well he remembered, that he had, *even then, a clear conviction in his own mind, that there was one thing*

*which God could not do ;—that he could not annihilate that space which was in the room where they were.”*¹

¹ The question concerning the necessary existence of Space and of Time formed one of the principal subjects of discussion between Clarke and Leibnitz. According to the former, space and time are, both of them, infinite, immutable, and indestructible. According to his antagonist, “space is nothing but the order of things co-existing,” and “time nothing but the order of things successive !” The notion of real absolute Space, in particular, he pronounces to be *a mere chimera and superficial imagination* ; classing it with those prejudices which Bacon called *idola tribus*. (See his 4th Paper, § 14.)

It has always appeared to me a thing quite inexplicable, that the great majority of philosophers, both in Germany and in France, have, on the above question, decided in favour of Leibnitz. Even D’Alembert himself, who, on most metaphysical points, reasons so justly and so profoundly, has, in this instance, been carried along by the prevailing opinion (or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, by the fashionable phraseology) among his countrymen. “Y auroit-il un espace, s’il n’y avoit point de corps, et une durée s’il n’y avoit rien ? Ces questions viennent, ce me semble, de ce qu’on suppose au temps et à l’espace plus de réalité qu’ils n’en ont. . . . Les enfants, qui disent que le vuide n’est rien, ont raison parce qu’ils s’en tiennent aux simples notions du sens commun ;* et les philosophes, qui veulent réaliser le vuide se perdent dans leurs spéculations : le vuide a été enfanté par les abstractions, et voilà l’abus d’une méthode si utile à bien des égards. *S’il n’y avoit point de corps et de succession, l’espace et le temps seroient possibles, mais ils n’existeroient pas.*” (*Mélanges*, &c. T. V § xvi.) Bailly, a writer by no means partial to D’Alembert, quotes, with entire approbation, the foregoing observations ; subjoining to them, in the following terms, his own judgment on the merits of this branch of the controversy between Clarke and Leibnitz. “La notion du temps et de l’espace, est un des points sur lesquels Leibnitz a combattu contre Clarke ; mais il nous semble que l’Anglois n’a rien opposé de satisfaisant aux raisons de Leibnitz.” (*Eloge de Leibnitz*.)

As for the point here in dispute, I must own, that it does not seem to me a fit subject for argument ; inasmuch as I cannot even form a conception of the proposition contended for by Leibnitz. The

* I quote the sequel of this passage on the authority of Bailly (see his *Eloge on Leibnitz*), for it is not to be found in the copy of the *Mélanges* before me, printed at Amsterdam in 1767.

With this early and deep impression on his mind, it is easy to conceive how Newton's *Scholium* should have encouraged him to resume the musings of his *boyish days*, concerning the necessary existence of space; and to trace, as far as he could, its connection with the principles of natural theology. But the above anecdote affords a proof how strongly his habits of thought had long before predisposed him for the prosecution of a metaphysical idea, precisely the same with that on which this scholium proceeds.

It would be superfluous to dwell longer on the history of these speculations, which, whatever value they may possess in the opinion of persons accustomed to deep and abstract reasoning, are certainly not well adapted to ordinary or to uncultivated understandings. This consideration furnishes, of itself, no slight presumption, that they were not intended to be the *media* by which the bulk of mankind were to be led to the knowledge of truths so essential to human happiness; and, accordingly, it was on this very ground, that Bishop Butler, and Dr. Francis Hutcheson, were induced to strike into a different and more popular path for establishing the fundamental principles of religion and morality. Both of these writers appear to have communicated, in very early youth, their doubts and objections to Dr. Clarke; and to have had, even then, a glimpse of those inquiries by which they were afterwards to give so new and so fortunate a direction to the ethical studies of their countrymen. It is

light in which the question struck Clarke in his childhood, is the same in which I am still disposed to view it; or rather, I should say, is the light in which I must ever view it, while the frame of my understanding continues unaltered. Of what *data* is human reason possessed, from which it is entitled to argue in opposition to truths; the contrary of which it is impossible not only to prove, but to express in terms comprehensible by our faculties?

For some remarks on the scholastic controversies concerning *space* and *time*, see the First Part of this *Dissertation*, Note I. See also Locke's *Essay*, Book ii. Chap. 13. §§ 16, 17, 18.

sufficient here to remark this circumstance as an important step in the progress of moral philosophy. The farther illustration of it properly belongs to another part of this discourse.

The chief glory of Clarke, as a metaphysical author, is due to the boldness and ability with which he placed himself in the breach against the Necessitarians and Fatalists of his times. With a mind far inferior to that of Locke, in comprehensiveness, in originality, and in fertility of invention, he was nevertheless the more wary and skilful disputant of the two, possessing, in a singular degree, that reach of thought in grasping remote consequences, which effectually saved him from those rash concessions into which Locke was frequently betrayed by the greater warmth of his temperament, and vivacity of his fancy. This logical foresight (the natural result of his habits of mathematical study) rendered him peculiarly fit to contend with adversaries, eager and qualified to take advantage of every vulnerable point in his doctrines; but it gave, at the same time, to his style a tameness, and monotony, and want of colouring, which never appear in the easy and spirited, though often unfinished and unequal, sketches of Locke. Voltaire has somewhere said of him, that he was a mere reasoning machine (*un moulin à raisonnement*), and the expression (though doubtless much too unqualified) possesses a merit in point of just discrimination of which Voltaire was probably not fully aware.¹

¹ In the extent of his learning, the correctness of his taste, and the depth of his scientific acquirements, Clarke possessed indisputable advantages over Locke; with which advantages he combined another not less important, the systematical steadiness with which his easy fortune and unbroken leisure enabled him to pursue his favourite speculations through the whole course of his life.

On the subject of Free-will, Locke is more indistinct, undecided, and inconsistent, than might have been expected from his powerful mind, when directed to so important a question. This

I have already taken notice of Clarke's defence of moral liberty in opposition to Leibnitz ; but soon after this contro-

was probably owing to his own strong feelings in favour of man's moral liberty, struggling with the deep impression left on his philosophical creed by the writings of Hobbes, and with his deference for the talents of his own intimate friend, Anthony Collins.* That Locke conceived himself to be an advocate for *free-will*, appears indisputably from many expressions in his Chapter on *Power* ; and yet, in that very chapter, he has made various concessions to his adversaries, in which he seems to yield all that was contended for by Hobbes and Collins : And, accordingly, he is ranked, with some appearance of truth, by Priestley, with those who, while they opposed verbally the scheme of necessity, have adopted it substantially, without being aware of their mistake.

In one of Locke's letters to Mr. Molyneux, he has stated, in the strongest possible terms, his conviction of man's free agency ; resting this conviction entirely on our indisputable consciousness of *the fact*. This declaration of Locke I consider as well worthy of attention in the argument about Free-will ; for although in questions of pure speculation, the authority of great names is entitled to no weight, excepting in so far as it is supported by solid reasonings, the case is otherwise with *facts* relating to the phenomena of the human mind. The patient attention with which Mr. Locke had studied these very nice phenomena during the course of a long life, gives to the results of his metaphysical experience a value of the same sort, but much greater in degree, with that which we attach to a delicate experiment in chemistry, when vouched by a Black or a Davy. The ultimate appeal, after all, must be made by every person to his own consciousness ; but when we have the experience of Locke on the one hand, and that of Priestley and Belsham on the other, the contrast is surely sufficient to induce every cautious inquirer to re-examine his feelings before he allows himself to listen to the statements of the latter in preference to that of the former.

For the information of some of my readers, it may be proper to mention that it has of late become fashionable among a certain class of metaphysicians, boldly to assert, that the evidence of *their* consciousness is decidedly in favour of the scheme of necessity.

But to return to Mr. Locke. The only consideration on this subject which seems to have staggered him, was the difficulty of

* See Note (Q.)

versy was brought to a conclusion by the death of his antagonist, he had to resume the same argument, in reply to his countryman, Anthony Collins; who, following the footsteps of Hobbes, with logical talents not inferior to those of his master, and with a weight of personal character in his favour, to which his master had no pretensions;¹ gave to the cause which he so warmly espoused, a degree of credit among sober and serious inquirers, which it had never before possessed in England. I have reserved, therefore, for this place, the few general reflections which I have to offer on this endless subject of controversy. In stating these, I shall be the less anxious to condense my thoughts, as I do not mean to return to the discussion in the sequel of this historical sketch. Indeed, I do not know of any thing that has been advanced by later writers, in support of the scheme

reconciling this opinion with the prescience of God. As to this theological difficulty, I have nothing to say at present. The only question which I consider as of any consequence, is the matter of fact; and, on this point, nothing can be more explicit and satisfactory than the words of Locke. In examining these, the attentive reader will be satisfied, that Locke's declaration is not as (Priestley asserts) in favour of the Liberty of Spontaneity, but in favour of the Liberty of Indifference, for, as to the former, there seems to be no difficulty in reconciling it with the prescience of God. "I own (says Mr. Locke) freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that though it be unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God our Maker, and though *I cannot have a clearer perception of anything than that I am free*; yet I cannot make freedom in man consistent with omnipotence and omniscience in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truth I most firmly assent to; and therefore I have long since given off the consideration of that question; resolving all into this short conclusion, that, *if it be possible for God to make a free agent, then man is free, though I see not the way of it.*"

¹ In speaking disrespectfully of the personal character of Hobbes, I allude to the base servility of his political principles, and to the suppleness with which he adapted them to the opposite interests of the three successive governments under which his literary life was spent. To his private virtues the most honourable testimony has been borne, both by his friends and by his enemies.

of necessity, of which the germ is not to be found in the inquiry of Collins.

In order to enter completely into the motives which induced Clarke to take so zealous and so prominent a part in the dispute about Free Will, it is necessary to look back to the system of Spinoza; an author, with whose peculiar opinions I have hitherto avoided to distract my readers' attention. At the time when he wrote, he does not appear to have made many proselytes; the extravagant and alarming consequences in which his system terminated, serving with most persons as a sufficient antidote against it. Clarke was probably the first who perceived distinctly the logical accuracy of his reasoning; and that, if the principles were admitted, it was impossible to resist the conclusions deduced from them.¹ It seems to have been the object both of Leibnitz and of Collins, to obviate the force of this indirect argument against the scheme of necessity, by attempting to reconcile it with the moral agency of man; a task which, I think, it must be allowed, was much less ably and plausibly executed by the former than by the latter. Convinced, on the other hand, that Spinoza had reasoned from his premises much more rigorously than either Collins or Leibnitz, Clarke bent the whole force of his mind to demonstrate that these premises were false; and, at the same time, to put incautious reasoners on their guard against the seducing sophistry of his antagonists, by showing, that there was no medium between admitting the free-agency of man, and of acquiescing in all the monstrous absurdities which the creed of Spinoza involves.

Spinoza,² it may be proper to mention, was an Amsterdam Jew of Portuguese extraction, who (with a view probably to

¹ Dr Reid's opinion on this point coincides exactly with that of Clarke. See his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, (p. 289, 4to. Edition,) where he pronounces the system of Spinoza to be "the genuine, and the most tenable system of necessity."

² Born 1632, died 1677. It is observed by Bayle, that "although Spinoza was the first who reduced Atheism to a system,

gain a more favourable reception to his philosophical dogmas) withdrew himself from the sect in which he had been educated, and afterwards appears to have lived chiefly in the society of Christians; without, however, making any public profession of the Christian faith, or even submitting to the ceremony of baptism. In his philosophical creed, he at first embraced the system of Descartes, and began his literary career with a work entitled, *Renati Descartes Principiorum Philosophiæ, Pars Prima et Secunda, More Geometrico Demonstratæ*, 1663. It was, however, in little else than his physical principles that he agreed with Descartes; for no two philosophers ever differed more widely in their metaphysical and theological tenets. *Fontenelle* characterizes his system as a "Cartesianism pushed to extravagance" (*une Cartesianisme outrée*); an expression which, although far

and formed it into a body of doctrine, connected according to the method of geometricians, yet, in other respects, his opinion is not new, the substance of it being the same with that of several other philosophers, both ancient and modern, European and Eastern." See his Dict. art. *Spinoza*, and the authorities in Note (A).

It is asserted by a late German writer, that "Spinoza has been little heard of in England, and not at all in France, and that he has been zealously defended and attacked by Germans alone." The same writer informs us, that "the philosophy of Leibnitz has been little studied in France, and not at all in England." (*Lectures on the History of Literature*. by Fred. Schlegel. English trans. published at Edin. 1818 Vol. II p 243.)

Is it possible that an author who pronounces so dogmatically upon the philosophy of England, should never have heard the name of Dr. Clarke?

The Synagogue were so indignant at his apostacy, that they pronounced against him their *highest* sentence of excommunication called *Schammata*. The form of the sentence may be found in the Treatise of Selden, *De Jure Naturæ et Gentium*, Lib. IV. c. 7. It is a document of some curiosity, and will scarcely suffer by a comparison with the Popish form of excommunication recorded by Sterne. For some farther particulars with respect to Spinoza see Note (R.)

from conveying a just or adequate idea of the whole spirit of his doctrines, applies very happily to his boldness and pertinacity in following out his avowed principles to the most paradoxical consequences which he conceived them to involve. The reputation of his writings, accordingly, has fallen entirely (excepting perhaps in Germany and in Holland) with the philosophy on which they were grafted; although some of the most obnoxious opinions contained in them are still, from time to time, obtruded on the world, under the disguise of a new form, and of a phraseology less revolting to modern taste.

In no part of Spinoza's works has he avowed himself an atheist; but it will not be disputed, by those who comprehend the drift of his reasonings, that, in point of practical tendency, Atheism and Spinozism are one and the same. In this respect, we may apply to Spinoza (and I may add to Vanini also) what Cicero has said of Epicurus; *Verbis reliquit Deos, re sustulit*;—a remark which coincides exactly with an expression of Newton's in the *Scholium* at the end of the *Principia*: "DEUS sine dominio, providentia, et causis finalibus, nihil aliud est quam FATUM et NATURA."¹

Among other doctrines of natural and revealed religion, which Spinoza affected to embrace, was that of the Divine Omnipresence; a doctrine which, combined with the Plenum

¹ One of the most elaborate and acute refutations of Spinozism which has yet appeared is to be found in Bayle's Dictionary, where it is described as "the most monstrous scheme imaginable, and the most diametrically opposite to the clearest notions of the mind." The same author affirms, that "it has been fully overthrown even by the weakest of its adversaries."—"It does not, indeed, appear possible" (as Mr Maclaurin has observed) "to invent another system equally absurd: amounting (as it does in fact) to this proposition, that there is but one substance in the universe, endowed with infinite attributes (particularly infinite extension and cogitation), which produces all other things necessarily as its own modifications, and which alone is, in all events, both physical and moral, at once cause and effect, agent and patient."—*View of Newton's Discoveries*, Book. I. Chap. 4.

of Descartes, led him, by a short and plausible process of reasoning, to the revival of the old theory which represented God as *the soul of the world*; or rather to that identification of God and of the material universe, which I take to be still more agreeable to the idea of Spinoza.¹ I am particularly

¹ Spinoza supposes that there are in God two eternal properties, thought and extension; and as he held, with Descartes, that extension is the essence of matter, he must necessarily have conceived *materiality* to be an essential attribute of God. “Per Corpus intelligo modum, qui Dei essentiam quatenus ut res extensa consideratur, certo et determinato modo exprimit.” (*Ethica ordine Geometrico Demonstrata*. Pars 2. Defin. 1. See also *Ethic.* Pars 1. Prop. 14.) With respect to the other attributes of God, he held, that God is the *cause* of all things; but that he acts, not from choice, but from necessity; and, of consequence, that he is the involuntary author of all the good and evil, virtue and vice, which are exhibited in human life. “Res nullo alio modo, neque alio ordine a Deo produci potuerunt, quam productæ sunt.” (*Ibid.* Pars 1. Prop. 33.) In one of his letters to Mr. Oldenburgh (Letter 21), he acknowledges, that his ideas of God and of nature were very different from those entertained by *modern* Christians; adding by way of explanation, “Deum rerum omnium causam immanentem, non vero transeuntem statuo;”—an expression to which I can annex no other meaning but this, that God is inseparably and essentially united with his works, and that they form together but one being.

The diversity of opinions entertained concerning the nature of Spinozism has been chiefly owing to this, that some have formed their notions of it from the books which Spinoza published during his life, and others from his posthumous remains. It is in the last alone (particularly in his *Ethics*) that his system is to be seen completely unveiled and undisguised. In the former, and also in the letters addressed to his friends, he occasionally accommodates himself, with a very temporizing spirit, to what he considered as the prejudices of the world. In proof of this, see his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, and his epistolary correspondence, *passim*; above all, his letter to a young friend who had apostatized from Protestantism to the Catholic Church. The letter is addressed, Nobilissimo Juveni, *Alberto Burgh*. (*Spin. Op.* T. II. p. 695.)

The edition of Spinoza's works, to which my references are made, is the complete and very accurate one published at Jena in 1802, by Henr. Eberh. Gottlob Paulus, who styles himself Doctor and Professor of Theology.

anxious to direct the attention of my readers to this part of his system, as I conceive it to be at present very generally misrepresented, or, at least, very generally misunderstood; a thing not to be wondered at, considering the total neglect

This learned divine is at no pains to conceal his admiration of the character as well as talents of his author; nor does he seem to have much to object to the system of Spinozism, as explained in his posthumous work upon Ethics; a work which, the editor admits, contains the only genuine exposition of Spinoza's creed. "*Sedes systematis quod sibi condidit in ethica est.*" (*Præf. Iteratæ Editionis*, p. ix.) In what manner all this was reconciled in his theological lectures with the doctrines either of natural or of revealed religion, it is not very easy to imagine. Perhaps he only affords a new example of what Dr. Clarke long ago remarked, that "Believing too much and too little have commonly the luck to meet together, like two things moving contrary ways in the same circle." (*Third Letter to Dodwell.*)

A late German writer, who, in his own opinions, has certainly no leaning towards Spinozism, has yet spoken of the moral tendency of Spinoza's writings, in terms of the warmest praise. "The morality of Spinoza (says M. Fred. Schlegel) is not indeed that of the Bible, for he himself was no Christian, but it is still a pure and noble morality, resembling that of the ancient Stoics, perhaps possessing considerable advantages over that system. That which makes him strong when opposed to adversaries, who do not understand or feel his depth, or who unconsciously have fallen into errors not much different from his, is not merely the scientific clearness and decision of his intellect, but in a much higher degree the open-heartedness, strong feeling, and conviction, with which all that he says seems to gush from his heart and soul." (*Lect. of Fred. Schlegel*, Eng. Trans. Vol. II. p. 244.) The rest of the passage, which contains a sort of apology for the system of Spinoza, is still more curious.

Although it is with the metaphysical tenets of Spinoza alone that we are immediately concerned at present, it is not altogether foreign to my purpose to observe, that he had also speculated much about the principles of government; and that the coincidence of his opinions with those of Hobbes, on this last subject, was not less remarkable than the similarity of their views on the most important questions of metaphysics and ethics. Unconnected as these different branches of knowledge may at first appear, the theories of Spinoza and of Hobbes concerning all of them, formed parts of one and the same system; the whole ter-

into which his works have long fallen. It is only in this way I can account for the frequent use which has most unfairly

minating ultimately in the maxim with which (according to Plutarch) Anaxarchus consoled Alexander after the murder of Clytus: Παν το πραχθεν απο τε κραστευτος δικαιοι ειναι. Even in discussing the question about Liberty and Necessity, Hobbes cannot help glancing at this political corollary. "The *power* of God alone is a sufficient *justification* of any action he doth." . . . "That which he doth is made just by his doing it." . . . "Power irresistible justifies *all* actions really and properly, in whomsoever it be found." (*Of Liberty and Necessity*, addressed to the Lord Marquis of Newcastle.) Spinoza has expressed himself exactly to the same purpose. (See his *Tractatus Politicus*, Cap. 2. §§ 3, 4.) So steadily, indeed, is this practical application of their abstract principles kept in view by both these writers, that not one generous feeling is ever suffered to escape the pen of either in favour of the rights, the liberties, or the improvement of their species.

The close affinity between those abstract theories which tend to degrade human nature, and that accommodating morality which prepares the minds of men for receiving passively the yoke of slavery, although too little attended to by the writers of literary history, has not been overlooked by those deeper politicians who are disposed (as has been alleged of the first of the Cæsars) to consider their fellow-creatures "but as rubbish in the way of their ambition, or tools to be employed in removing it." This practical tendency of the Epicurean philosophy is remarked by one of the wisest of the Roman statesmen; and we learn from the same high authority, how fashionable this philosophy was in the higher circles of his countrymen, at that disastrous period which immediately preceded the ruin of the Republic. "Nunquam audiui in Epicuri schola, Lycurgum, Solonem, Miltiadem, Themistoclem, Epaminondam nominari; qui in ore sunt ceterorum omnium philosophorum." (*De Fin. Lib. ii. c. 21.*) "Nec tamen Epicuri licet oblivisci, si cupiam; cujus imaginem non modo in tabulis nostri familiares, sed etiam in poculis, et annulis, habent." (*Ibid. Lib. v. c. 1.*)

The prevalence of Hobbism at the court of Charles II. (a fact acknowledged by Clarendon himself) is but one of the many instances which might be quoted from modern times in confirmation of these remarks.

The practical tendency of such doctrines as would pave the way to universal scepticism, by holding up to ridicule the extravagancies and inconsistencies of the learned, is precisely similar. We are told by Tacitus (*Annal. Lib. 14.*) that Nero was

been made of the term *Spinozism* to stigmatise and discredit some doctrines, or rather some modes of speaking, which have been sanctioned, not only by the wisest of the ancients, but by the highest names in English philosophy and literature ; and which, whether right or wrong, will be found, on a careful examination and comparison, not to have the most distant affinity to the absurd creed with which they have been confounded. I am afraid that Pope, in the following lines of the *Dunciad*, suffered himself so far to be misled by the malignity of Warburton, as to aim a secret stab at Newton and Clarke, by associating their figurative, and not altogether unexceptionable language, concerning *space* (when they called it the *sensorium* of the Deity), with the opinion of Spinoza, as I have just explained it.¹

accustomed, at the close of a banquet, to summon a party of philosophers, that he might amuse himself with listening to the endless diversity and discordancy of their respective systems ; nor were there wanting philosophers at Rome, the same historian adds, who were flattered to be thus exhibited as a spectacle at the table of the Emperor. What a deep and instructive moral is conveyed by this anecdote ! and what a contrast does it afford to the sentiment of one of Nero's successors, who was himself a philosopher in the best sense of the word, and whose reign furnishes some of the fairest pages in the annals of the human race ! “ I search for truth (says Marcus Antoninus), by which no person has ever been injured.” *Ζηλω γὰρ τὴν ἀληθειαν, ὅφ' ἡς οὐδὲς πῶποτι βλάβη.*

¹ Warburton, indeed, always *professes* great respect for Newton, but of his hostility to Clarke it is unnecessary to produce any other proof than his note on the following line of the *Dunciad* :

“ Where Tindal dictates, and Silenus snores.”

B. iv. l. 492.

May I venture to add, that the noted line of the *Essay on Man*,

“ And showed a Newton as we show an ape,”

could not possibly have been written by any person impressed with a due veneration for this glory of his species ?

“Thrust some Mechanic Cause into His place,
Or bind in matter, or *diffuse in space*.”

How little was it suspected by the poet, when this sarcasm escaped him, that the charge of Spinozism and Pantheism was afterwards to be brought against himself, for the sublimest passage to be found in his writings!

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

— — — — —
Lives through all life, *extends through all extent*,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”¹

Bayle was, I think, the writer who first led the way to this misapplication of the term *Spinozism*; and his object in doing so, was plainly to destroy the effect of the most refined and philosophical conceptions of the Deity which were ever formed by the unassisted power of human reason.

“Estne Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aer,
Et cælum, et virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?
Jupiter est quodcumque vides, quocumque moveris.”

“Is there a place that God would choose to love
Beyond this earth, the seas, yon Heaven above
And virtuous minds, the noblest throne for Jove?
Why seek we farther then? Behold around,
How all thou seest does with the God abound,
Jove is alike to all, and always to be found.”

Rowe's *Lucan*.

Who, but Bayle, could have thought of extracting anything like Spinozism from such verses as these!

¹ This passage (as Warton has remarked) bears a very striking analogy to a noble one in the old Orphic verses quoted in the treatise Περὶ κόσμου, ascribed to Aristotle; and it is not a little curious, that the same ideas occur in some specimens of *Hindoo* poetry, translated by Sir W. Jones; more particularly in the Hymn to *Narrayna*, or the Spirit of God, taken, as he informs us, from the writings of their ancient authors:

Omniscient Spirit, whose all-ruling power
Bids from each sense bright emanations beam;
Glows in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream,
&c. &c.

On a subject so infinitely disproportioned to our faculties, it is vain to expect language will bear a logical and captious examination. Even the Sacred Writers themselves are forced to adapt their phraseology to the comprehension of those to whom it is addressed, and frequently borrow the figurative diction of poetry to convey ideas which must be interpreted, not according to the letter, but the spirit of the passage. It is thus that thunder is called the voice of God; the wind, His breath; and the tempest, the blast of His nostrils. Not attending to this circumstance, or rather not choosing to direct to it the attention of his readers, Spinoza has laid hold of the well known expression of St. Paul, that "in God we live, and move, and have our being," as a proof that the ideas of the apostle, concerning the Divine Nature, were pretty much the same with his own; a consideration which, if duly weighed, might have protected some of the passages above quoted from the uncharitable criticisms to which they have frequently been exposed.¹

¹ Mr. Gibbon, in commenting upon the celebrated lines of Virgil,

*"Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus,
"Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet,"*

observes, that "the mind which is INFUSED into the different parts of matter, and which MINGLES ITSELF with the mighty mass, scarcely retains any property of a spiritual substance, and bears too near an affinity to the principles which the impious Spinoza revived rather than invented." He adds, however, that "the poverty of human language, and the obscurity of human ideas, make it difficult to speak worthily of the GREAT FIRST CAUSE; and that our most religious poets (particularly Pope and Thomson), in striving to express the presence and energy of the Deity in every part of the universe, deviate unwarily into images which require a favourable construction. But these writers (he candidly remarks) deserve that favour, by the sublime manner in which they celebrate the Great Father of the universe, and by those effusions of love and gratitude which are

To return, however, to Collins, from whose controversy with Clarke I was insensibly led aside into this short digression about Spinoza : I have already said, that it seems to have been the aim of Collins to vindicate the doctrine of Necessity from the reproach brought on it by its supposed alliance with Spinozism ; and to retort upon the partizans of free-will the charges of favouring atheism and immorality. In proof of this I have only to quote the account, given by the author himself, of the plan of his work :

“ Too much care cannot be taken to prevent being misunderstood and prejudged, in handling questions of such nice speculation as those of Liberty and Necessity ; and, therefore, though I might in justice expect to be read be-

inconsistent with the materialist's system.” (*Misc. Works*, Vol. II. pp. 509, 510)

May I be permitted here to remark, that it is not only *difficult* but *impossible* to speak of the omnipresence and omnipotence of God, without deviating into such images ?

With the doctrine of the *Anima Mundi*, some philosophers, both ancient and modern, have connected another theory, according to which the souls of men are portions of the Supreme Being, with whom they are re-united at death, and in whom they are finally absorbed and lost. To assist the imagination in conceiving this theory, death has been compared to the breaking of a phial of water, immersed in the ocean. It is needless to say, that this incomprehensible jargon has no *necessary* connection with the doctrine which represents God as the soul of the world, and that it would have been loudly disclaimed, not only by Pope and Thomson, but by Epictetus, Antoninus, and all the wisest and soberest of the Stoical school. Whatever objections, therefore, may be made to this doctrine, let not its supposed *consequences* be charged upon any but those who may expressly avow them. On such a subject (as Gibbon has well remarked), “ we should be slow to suspect, and still slower to condemn.” (*Ibid.* p. 510.)

Sir William Jones mentions a very curious modification of this theory of *absorption*, as one of the doctrines of the *Vedanta* school. “ The Vedanta school represent *Elysian* happiness as a total absorption, *though not such as to destroy consciousness*, in the Divine Essence.” (*Dissertation on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India.*)

fore any judgment be passed on me, I think it proper to premise the following observations :

“ 1. *First*, Though I deny *liberty* in a certain meaning of that word, yet I contend for *liberty*, as it signifies a *power in man to do as he wills or pleases*.

“ 2. *Secondly*, When I affirm *necessity*, I contend only for *moral necessity* ; meaning thereby, that man, who is an intelligent and sensible being, is determined by his reason and his senses ; and I deny man to be subject to such necessity, as is in clocks, watches, and such other beings, which, for want of sensation and intelligence, are subject to an absolute, physical, or mechanical necessity.

“ 3. *Thirdly*, I have undertaken to show, that the notions I advance are so far from being inconsistent with, that they are the sole foundations of morality and laws, and of rewards and punishments in society ; and that the notions I explode are subversive of them.”¹

In the prosecution of his argument on this question, Collins endeavours to show, that man is a necessary agent, 1. From our experience. (By *experience* he means our own consciousness that we *are* necessary agents.) 2. From the impossibility of liberty.² 3. From the consideration of the Divine prescience. 4. From the nature and use of rewards and punishments ; and, 5. From the nature of morality.³

In this view of the subject, and, indeed, in the very selection of his premises, it is remarkable how completely Collins has anticipated Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the most celebrated and indisputably the ablest champion of the scheme of Necessity who has since appeared. The coincidence is so per-

¹ *A Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty*, 3d Edit. Lond. 1735.

² See Note (S.)

³ See Note (T.)

fect, that the outline given by the former, of the plan of his work, might have served with equal propriety as a preface to that of the latter.

From the above summary, and still more from the whole tenor of the *Philosophical Inquiry*, it is evident, that Collins (one of the most obnoxious writers of his day to divines of all denominations) was not less solicitous than his successor Edwards to reconcile his metaphysical notions with man's accountableness and moral agency. The remarks, accordingly, of Clarke upon Collins's work, are equally applicable to that of Edwards. It is to be regretted that they seem never to have fallen into the hands of this very acute and honest reasoner. As for Collins, it is a remarkable circumstance, that he attempted no reply to this tract of Clarke's, although he lived twelve years after its publication. The reasonings contained in it, together with those on the same subject in his correspondence with Leibnitz, and in his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, form, in my humble opinion, the most important as well as powerful of all his metaphysical arguments.¹ The adversaries with whom he had to contend were, both of them, eminently distinguished by ingenuity and subtlety, and he seems to have put forth to the utmost his logical strength, in contending with such antagonists. "The liberty or moral agency of man (says his friend Bishop Hoadly) was a darling point to him. He excelled always, and showed a superiority to all, whenever it came into private discourse or public debate. But he never more excelled than when he was pressed with

¹ Voltaire, who, in all probability, never read either Clarke or Collins, has said that the former replied to the latter only by *Theological* reasonings: "*Clarke n'a repondu à Collins qu'en Théologien.*" (*Quest. sur l'Encyclopédie*, Art. *Liberté*.) Nothing can be more remote from the truth. The argument of Clarke is wholly *Metaphysical*; whereas, his antagonist, in various instances, has attempted to wrest to his own purposes the words of Scripture.

the strength Leibnitz was master of; which made him exert all his talents to set it once again in a clear light, to guard it against the evil of metaphysical obscurities, and to give the finishing stroke to a subject which must ever be the foundation of morality in man, and is the ground of the accountability of intelligent creatures for all their actions.”¹

It is needless to say, that neither Leibnitz nor Collins admitted the fairness of the inferences which Clarke conceived to follow from the scheme of necessity: But almost every page in the subsequent history of this controversy may be regarded as an additional illustration of the soundness of Clarke’s reasonings, and of the sagacity with which he anticipated the fatal errors likely to issue from the system which he opposed.

“Thus (says a very learned disciple of Leibnitz, who made his first appearance as an author about thirty years after the death of his master)²—Thus, the same chain embraces the physical and moral worlds, binds the past to the present, the present to the future, the future to eternity.”

“That wisdom which has ordained the existence of this chain, has doubtless willed that of every link of which it is composed. A CALIGULA is one of those links, and this link is of iron: A MARCUS AURELIUS is another link, and this link is of gold. *Both* are necessary parts of one whole, which could not but exist. Shall God then be angry at the sight of the iron link? What absurdity! God esteems this link at its proper value: He sees it in its cause, and he ap-

¹ Preface to the Folio Ed. of Clarke’s *Works*.—The vital importance which Clarke attached to this question, has given to the concluding paragraphs of his remarks on Collins, an earnestness and a solemnity of which there are not many instances in his writings. These paragraphs cannot be too strongly recommended to the attention of those well-meaning persons, who, in our own times, have come forward as the apostles of Dr. Priestley’s “great and glorious Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity.”

² Charles Bonnet, born 1720, died 1793.

proves this cause, for it is good. God beholds moral monsters as he beholds physical monsters. Happy is the link of gold! Still more happy if he know that he is *only fortunate*.¹ He has attained the highest degree of moral perfection, and is nevertheless without pride, knowing that what he is, is the necessary result of the place which he must occupy in the chain."

"The gospel is the allegorical exposition of this system; the simile of the potter is its summary."² (Bonnet, T. VIII. pp. 237, 238.)

In what essential respect does this system differ from that of Spinoza? Is it not even more dangerous in its practical tendency, in consequence of the high strain of mystical devotion by which it is exalted?³

¹ The words in the original are, "Heureux le chainon d'or! plus *heureux* encore, s'il sait qu'il n'est qu' *heureux*." The double meaning of *heureux*, if it render the expression less logically precise, gives it at least an epigrammatic turn, which cannot be preserved in our language.

² See Note (U.)

³ Among the various forms which religious enthusiasm assumes there is a certain prostration of the mind, which, under the specious disguise of a deep humility, aims at exalting the Divine perfections, by annihilating all the powers which belong to Human Nature. "Nothing is more usual for fervent devotion (says Sir James Mackintosh, in speaking of some theories current among the Hindoos), than to dwell so long and so warmly on the meanness and worthlessness of created things, and on the all-sufficiency of the Supreme Being, that it slides insensibly from comparative to absolute language, and in the eagerness of its zeal to magnify the Deity, seems to annihilate everything else." (See *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. p. 529, 2d Ed.)

This excellent observation may serve to account for the zeal displayed by Bonnet, and many other devout men, in favour of the Scheme of Necessity. "We have nothing (they frequently and justly remind us) but what we have received."—But the question here is simply a matter of fact, whether we have or have not *received* from God the gift of Free-Will; and the only argument, it must be remembered, which they have yet been able to advance for the negative proposition, is, that this gift

This objection, however, does not apply to the quotations which follow. They exhibit, without any colourings of imagination or of enthusiasm, the scheme of necessity pushed to the remotest and most alarming conclusions which it appeared to Clarke to involve; and as they express the serious and avowed creed of two of our contemporaries (both of them men of distinguished talents), may be regarded as a proof, that the zeal displayed by Clarke against the metaphysical principles which led ultimately to such results, was not so unfounded as some worthy and able inquirers have supposed.

May I be permitted to observe farther on this head, that, as one of these writers spent his life in the pay of a German prince, and as the other was the favourite philosopher of another sovereign, still more illustrious, the sentiments which they were so anxious to proclaim to the world, may be presumed to have been not very offensive (in their judgments) to the ears of their protectors.

“All that is must be (says the Baron de Grimm, addressing himself to the Duke of Saxe-Gotha), All that is must be, even because it is; this is the only sound philosophy; as long as we do not know this universe *a priori* (as they say in the schools), ALL IS NECESSITY.¹ Liberty is a word without meaning, as you shall see in the letter of M. Diderot.”

was *impossible*, even for the power of God; nay, the same argument which annihilates the power of Man, annihilates that of God also, and subjects him, as well as all his creatures, to the control of causes which he is unable to resist. So completely does this scheme defeat the pious views in which it has sometimes originated.—I say *sometimes*; for the very same argument against the liberty of the Will is employed by Spinoza, according to whom the free-agency of man involves the absurd supposition of an *imperium in imperio* in the universe. (*Tractat. Polit. Cap. II. § 6.*)

¹ The logical inference ought undoubtedly to have been, “As long as we know nothing of the universe *a priori*, we are not entitled to say of anything that it either is, or is not, necessary.”

The following passage is extracted from Diderot's letter here referred to :

“ I am now, my dear friend, going to quit the tone of a preacher to take, if I can, that of a philosopher. Examine it narrowly, and you will see that the word *Liberty* is a word devoid of meaning ;¹ that there are not, and that there cannot be free beings ; that we are only what accords with the general order, with our organization, our education, and the chain of events. These dispose of us invincibly. We can no more conceive a being acting without a motive, than we can one of the arms of a balance acting without a weight. The motive is always exterior and foreign, fastened upon us by some cause distinct from ourselves. What deceives us, is the prodigious variety of our actions, joined to the habit which we catch at our birth, of confounding the voluntary and the free. We have been so often praised and blamed, and have so often praised and blamed others, that we contract an inveterate prejudice of believing that we and they will and act freely. But if there is no liberty, there is no action that merits either praise or blame ; neither vice nor virtue, nothing that ought either to be rewarded or punished. What then is the distinction among men ? The doing of good and the doing of ill ! The doer of ill is one who must be destroyed, not punished. The doer of good is lucky, not virtuous. But though neither the doer of good or of ill be free, man is nevertheless a being to be modified ; it is for this reason the doer of ill should be destroyed upon the scaffold. From thence the good effects of education, of pleasure, of grief, of grandeur, of poverty, &c. ; from thence a philosophy full of pity, strongly attached to the good, nor more angry with the wicked, than with the whirlwind which fills one's eyes with dust. Strictly speaking, there is but one sort of causes, that is, physical causes. There is but one sort of necessity, which

¹ Does not this remark of Diderot apply with infinitely greater force to the word *necessity*, as employed in this controversy ?

is the same for all beings. This is what reconciles me to humankind : it is for this reason I exhorted you to philanthropy. Adopt these principles if you think them good, or show me that they are bad. If you adopt them, they will reconcile *you* too with others and with yourself: you will neither be pleased nor angry with yourself for being what you are. Reproach others for nothing, and repent of nothing ; this is the first step to wisdom. Besides this, all is prejudice and false philosophy.”¹

The prevalence of the principles here so earnestly inculcated among the higher orders in France, at a period somewhat later in the history of the monarchy, may be judged of from the occasional allusions to them in the dramatic pieces then chiefly in request at Paris. In the *Mariage de Figaro* (the popularity of which was quite unexampled,) the hero of the piece, an intriguing valet in the service of a Spanish courtier, is introduced as thus moralizing, in a soliloquy on his own free-agency and personal identity. Such an exhibition upon the English stage would have been universally censured as out of character and extravagant, or rather, would have been completely unintelligible to the crowds by which our theatres are filled.

“ Oh bizarre suite d’événemens ! Comment cela m’a-t-il arrivé ? Pourquoi ces choses et non pas d’autres ? Qui les a fixées sur ma tête ? Forcé de parcourir la route où je suis

¹ Nearly to the same purpose, we are told by Mr. Belsham, that “ the *fallacious* feeling of *remorse* is superseded by the doctrine of necessity.” (*Elem.* p. 284.) And, again, “ *Remorse* supposes free-will. It is of little or no use in moral discipline. In a degree, it is even pernicious.” (*Ibid.* p. 406.)

Nor does the opinion of Hartley seem to have been different. “ The doctrine of Necessity has a tendency to abate all resentment against men. Since all they do against us is by the appointment of God, it is rebellion against him to be offended with them.”

For the originals of the quotations from Grimm and Diderot, see Note (X.)

entré sans le savoir, comme j'en sortirai sans le vouloir, je l'ai jonchée d'autant de fleurs que ma gaieté me la permit ; encore je dis *ma* gaieté, sans savoir si elle est à moi plus que le reste, ni même qui est ce *moi* dont je m'occupe."

That this soliloquy, though put into the mouth of Figaro, was meant as a picture of the philosophical jargon at that time affected by courtiers and men of the world, will not be doubted by those, who have attended to the importance of the *roles* commonly assigned to confidential valets in French comedies ; and to the habits of familiarity in which they are always represented as living with their masters. The sentiments which they are made to utter may, accordingly, be safely considered as but an echo of the lessons which they have learned from their superiors.¹

My anxiety to state, without any interruption, my remarks on some of the most important questions to which the attention of the public was called by the speculations of Locke, of Leibnitz, of Newton, and of Clarke, has led me, in various instances, to depart from the strict order of chronology. It is time for me, however, now to pause, and, before I proceed farther, to supply a few chasms in the foregoing sketch.

¹ A reflection of Voltaire's on the writings of Spinoza may, I think, be here quoted without impropriety. "Vous êtes très confus, Baruc Spinoza, mais êtes vous aussi dangereux qu'on le dit ? Je soutiens que non, et ma raison c'est que vous êtes confus, que vous avez écrit en mauvais Latin, et qu'il n'y a pas dix personnes en Europe qui vous lisent d'un bout à l'autre. Quel est l'auteur dangereux ? C'est celui qui est lu par les Oisifs de la Cour, et par les Dames." (*Quest. sur l'Encyclop. Art. Dieu.*)

Had Voltaire kept this last remark steadily in view in his own writings, how many of those pages would he have cancelled which he has given to the world !

SECTION IV.

OF SOME AUTHORS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED, BY THEIR CRITICAL OR HISTORICAL WRITINGS, TO DIFFUSE A TASTE FOR METAPHYSICAL STUDIES—BAYLE—FONTENELLE—ADDISON. METAPHYSICAL WORKS OF BERKELEY.

AMONG the many eminent persons who were either driven from France, or who went into voluntary exile, in consequence of the revocation of the edict of Nantz, the most illustrious by far was Bayle ; ¹ who, fixing his residence in Holland, and availing himself, to the utmost extent, of the religious toleration then enjoyed in that country, diffused from thence, over Europe, a greater mass of accurate and curious information, accompanied by a more splendid display of acute and lively criticism, than had ever before come from the pen of a single individual. ² Happy ! if he had been able to restrain within due bounds his passion for sceptical and licentious discussion, and to respect the feelings of the wise and good, on topics connected with religion and morality. But, in the peculiar circumstances in which he was educated, combined with the seducing profession of a literary adventurer, to which his hard fortune condemned him, such a spirit of moderation was rather to be wished than expected.

When Bayle first appeared as an author, the opinions of the learned still continued to be divided between Aristotle and Descartes. A considerable number leaned, in secret, to the metaphysical creed of Spinoza and of Hobbes ; while the

¹ Born in 1647, died 1705.

² The erudition of Bayle is greatly undervalued by his antagonist Le Clerc. "Toutes les lumières philosophiques de M. Bayle consistoient en quelque peu de Péripatétisme, qu'il avoit appris des Jésuites de Toulouse, et un peu de Cartésianisme, qu'il n'avoit jamais approfondi." (*Bib. Choisie*, Tom. XII. p. 106.)

In the judgment of Gibbon, "Bayle's learning was chiefly confined to the Latin authors ; and he had more of a certain multifarious reading than of real erudition. Le Clerc, his great antagonist, was as superior to him in that respect as inferior in every other." (*Extraits Raisonnés de mes Lectures*, p. 62.)

clergy of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches, instead of uniting their efforts in defence of those truths which they professed in common, wasted their strength against each other in fruitless disputes and recriminations.

In the midst of these controversies, Bayle, keeping aloof as far as possible from all the parties, indulged his sceptical and ironical humour at the common expence of the various combatants. Unattached himself to any system, or, to speak more correctly, unfixed in his opinions on the most fundamental questions, he did not prosecute any particular study with sufficient perseverance to add materially to the stock of useful knowledge. The influence, however, of his writings on the taste and views of speculative men of all persuasions, has been so great, as to mark him out as one of the most conspicuous characters of his age; and I shall accordingly devote to him a larger space than may, at first sight, appear due to an author who has distinguished himself only by the extent of his historical researches, and by the sagacity and subtlety of his critical disquisitions.

We are informed by Bayle himself, that his favourite authors, during his youth, were Plutarch and Montaigne; and from *them*, it has been alleged by some of his biographers, he imbibed his first lessons of scepticism. In what manner the first of these writers should have contributed to inspire him with this temper of mind, is not very obvious. There is certainly no heathen philosopher or historian whose morality is more pure or elevated; and none who has drawn the line between superstition and religion with a nicer hand.¹

¹ See, in particular, his account of the effects produced on the character of Pericles by the sublime lessons of Anaxagoras.

Plutarch, it is true, had said before Bayle, that atheism is less pernicious than superstition; but how wide the difference between this paradox, as explained and qualified by the Greek philosopher, and as interpreted and applied in the *Reflections on the Comet*! Mr. Addison himself seems to give his sanction to Plutarch's maxim in one of his papers on Cheerfulness. "An

Pope has with perfect truth said of him, that "he abounds more in strokes of good nature than any other author;" to which it may be added, that he abounds also in touches of simple and exquisite *pathos*, seldom to be met with among the greatest painters of antiquity. In all these respects what a contrast does Bayle present to Plutarch!

Considering the share which Bayle ascribes to Montaigne's Essays in forming his literary taste, it is curious, that there is no separate article allotted to Montaigne in the *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. What is still more curious, there is more than one reference to this article, as if it actually existed; without any explanation of the omission (as far as I recollect) from the author or the publisher of the work. Some very interesting particulars, however, concerning Montaigne's life and writings, are scattered over the Dictionary, in the notices of other persons, with whom his name appeared to Bayle to have a sufficient connection to furnish an apology for a short episode.

It does not seem to me a very improbable conjecture, that Bayle had intended, and perhaps attempted, to write an account of Montaigne; and that he had experienced greater difficulties than he was aware of, in the execution of his design. Notwithstanding their common tendency to Scepticism, no two characters were ever more strongly discriminated in their most prominent features; the doubts of the one resulting from the singular coldness of his moral temperament, combined with a subtlety and over-refinement in his habits of thinking, which rendered his ingenuity, acuteness, and erudition, more than a match for his good sense and sagacity;

eminent Pagan writer has made a discourse to show, that the atheist, who denies a God, does him less dishonour than the man who owns his being, but, at the same time, believes him to be cruel, hard to please, and terrible to human nature. For my own part, says he, I would rather it should be said of me, that there was never any such man as Plutarch, than that Plutarch was ill-natured, capricious, and inhuman." (*Spectator*, No. 494.)

—the indecision of the other partaking more of the shrewd and soldier-like *étourderie* of Henry IV. when he exclaimed, after hearing two lawyers plead on opposite sides of the same question, “*Ventre St. Gris ! il me semble que tous les deux ont raison.*”

Independently of Bayle’s constitutional bias towards Scepticism, some other motives, it is probable, conspired to induce him, in the composition of his *Dictionary*, to copy the spirit and tone of the old academic school. On these collateral motives a strong and not very favourable light is thrown by his own candid avowal in one of his letters. “In truth (says he to his correspondent Minutoli), it ought not to be thought strange, that so many persons should have inclined to Pyrrhonism ; for of all things in the world it is the most convenient. You may dispute with impunity against every body you meet, without any dread of that vexatious argument which is addressed *ad hominem*. You are never afraid of a retort ; for as you announce no opinion of your own, you are always ready to abandon those of others to the attacks of sophists of every description. In a word, you may dispute and jest on all subjects, without incurring any danger from the *lex talionis*.”¹ It is amusing to think, that the Pyrrhonism which Bayle himself has here so ingenuously accounted for, from motives of conveniency and of literary cowardice, should have been mistaken by so many of his disciples for

¹“ En vérité il ne faut pas trouver étrange que tant des gens aient donné dans le Pyrrhonisme. Car c’est la chose du monde le plus commode. Vous pouvez impunément disputer contre tous venans, et sans craindre ces argumens *ad hominem*, qui font quelquefois tant de peine. Vous ne craignez point la rétorsion ; puisque ne soutenant rien, vous abandonnez de bon cœur à tous les sophismes et à tous les raisonnemens de la terre quelque opinion que ce soit. Vous n’êtes jamais obligé d’en venir à la défensive. En un mot vous contestez et vous daubez sur toutes choses toute votre saoul, sans craindre la peine du talion.” (*Œuv. Div. de Bayle*, IV. p. 537.)

the sportive triumph of a superior intellect over the weaknesses and errors of human reason.¹

The profession of Bayle, which made it an object to him to turn to account even the sweepings of his study, affords an additional explanation of the indigested mass of heterogeneous and inconsistent materials contained in his Dictionary. Had he adopted any one system exclusively, his work would have shrunk in its dimensions into a comparatively narrow compass.²

¹ The estimate formed by Warburton of Bayle's character, both intellectual and moral, is candid and temperate. "A writer whose strength and clearness of reasoning can only be equalled by the gaiety, easiness and delicacy, of his wit; who, pervading human nature with a glance, struck into the province of paradox, as an exercise for the restless vigour of his mind: who, with a soul superior to the sharpest attacks of fortune, and a heart practised to the best philosophy, had not yet enough of real greatness, to overcome that last foible of superior geniuses, the temptation of honour, which the academical exercise of wit is supposed to bring to its professors." (*Divine Legation.*)

If there be any thing objectionable in this panegyric, it is the unqualified praise bestowed on Bayle's *wit*, which, though it seldom fails in copiousness, in poignancy, or in that grave argumentative irony, by which it is still more characteristically marked, is commonly as deficient in *gaiety* and *delicacy* as that of Warburton himself.

Leibnitz seems perfectly to have entered into the peculiar temper of his adversary Bayle, when he said of him, that "the only way to make Bayle write usefully, would be to attack him when he advances propositions that are sound and true; and to abstain from attacking him, when he says anything false or pernicious."

"Le vrai moyen de fairê écrire utilement M. Bayle, ce seroit de l'attaquer, lorsqu'il écrit des bonnes choses et vraies, car ce seroit le moyen de le piquer pour continuer. Au lieu qu'il ne faudroit point l'attaquer quand il en dit de mauvaises, car cela l'engagera à en dire d'autres aussi mauvaises pour soutenir les premières." (Tom. VI. p. 273.)

Leibnitz elsewhere says of him: *Ubi bene, nemo melius.* (Tom. I. p. 257.)

² "The inequality of Bayle's voluminous works (says Gibbon) is explained by his alternately writing for himself, for the bookseller, and for posterity; and if a severe critic would reduce

When these different considerations are maturely weighed, the omission by Bayle of the article *Montaigne* will not be much regretted by the admirers of the *Essays*. It is extremely doubtful if Bayle would have been able to seize the true spirit of Montaigne's character; and, at any rate, it is not in the delineation of character that Bayle excels. His critical acumen, indeed, in the examination of opinions and arguments, is unrivalled; but his portraits of persons commonly exhibit only the coarser lineaments which obtrude themselves on the senses of ordinary observers; and seldom, if ever, evince that discriminating and divining eye, or that sympathetic penetration into the retirements of the heart, which lend to every touch of a master artist, the never to be mistaken expression of truth and nature.

It furnishes some apology for the unsettled state of Bayle's opinions, that his habits of thinking were formed prior to the discoveries of the Newtonian School. Neither the vortices of Descartes, nor the monads and pre-established harmony of Leibnitz, were well calculated to inspire him with confidence in the powers of the human understanding; nor does he seem to have been led, either by taste or by genius, to

him to a single folio, that relic, like the books of the sybils, would become still more valuable." (Gibbon's *Mem.* p. 50.)

Mr. Gibbon observes in another place, that, "if Bayle wrote his *Dictionary* to empty the various collections he had made, without any particular design, he could not have chosen a better plan. It permitted him everything, and obliged him to nothing. By the double freedom of a *Dictionary* and of *Notes*, he could pitch on what articles he pleased, and say what he pleased on those articles." (*Extraits Raisonnés de mes Lectures*, p. 64.)

"How could such a genius as Bayle," says the same author, "employ three or four pages, and a great apparatus of learning, to examine whether Achilles was fed with marrow only; whether it was the marrow of lions and stags, or that of lions only," &c.? (*Ibid.* p. 66.)

For a long and interesting passage with respect to Bayle's history and character, see Gibbon's *Memoirs*, &c. Vol. I. pp. 49, 50, 51.

the study of those exacter sciences in which Kepler, Galileo, and others, had, in the preceding age, made such splendid advances. In Geometry he never proceeded beyond a few of the elementary propositions; and it is even said (although I apprehend with little probability) that his farther progress was stopped by some defect in his intellectual powers, which disqualified him for the successful prosecution of the study.

It is not unworthy of notice, that Bayle was the son of a Calvinist minister, and was destined by his father for his own profession; that during the course of his education in a college of Jesuits, he was converted to the Roman Catholic persuasion: ¹ and that finally he went to Geneva, where, if he was not recalled to the Protestant faith, he was at least most thoroughly reclaimed from the errors of popery.²

¹ “For the benefit of education, the Protestants were tempted to risk their children in the Catholic Universities; and in the 22d year of his age young Bayle was seduced by the arts and arguments of the Jesuits of Thoulouse. He remained about seventeen months in their hands a voluntary captive.” (Gibbon’s *Misc. Works*, Vol. I. p. 49.)

² According to Gibbon, “the piety of Bayle was offended by the excessive worship of creatures; and *the study of physics* convinced him of the impossibility of transubstantiation, which is abundantly refuted by the testimony of our senses.” (*Ibid.* p. 49.)

The same author, speaking of his own conversion from popery, observes (after allowing to his preceptor Mr. Pavillard “a handsome share” of the honour), “that it was principally effected by his private reflections;” adding the following very curious acknowledgment: “I still remember my solitary transport at the discovery of a *philosophical argument* against the doctrine of *transubstantiation*; that the text of Scripture, which seems to inculcate the real presence, is attested only by a single sense—our sight; while the real presence itself is disproved by three of our senses—the sight, the touch, and the taste.” (*Ibid.* p. 58.) That this “*philosophical argument*” should have had any influence on the mind of Gibbon, even at the early period of life when he made “the discovery,” would appear highly improbable, if the fact were not attested by himself; but as for Bayle, whose logical acumen was of a far harder and keener edge, it seems quite impossible to conceive, “that the study of physics”

To these early fluctuations in his religious creed, may be ascribed his singularly accurate knowledge of controversial theology, and of the lives and tenets of the most distinguished divines of both churches,—a knowledge much more minute than a person of his talents could well be supposed to accumulate from the mere impulse of literary curiosity. In these respects he exhibits a striking resemblance to the historian of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: Nor is the parallel between them less exact in the similar effects produced on their minds, by the polemical cast of their juvenile studies. Their common propensity to indulge in indecency is not so easily explicable. In neither does it seem to have originated in the habits of a dissolute youth; but in the wantonness of a polluted and distempered imagination. Bayle, it is well known, led the life of an anchorite;¹ and the licentiousness of his pen is, on that very account, the more reprehensible. But (everything considered) the grossness of Gibbon is certainly the more unaccountable, and perhaps the more unpardonable of the two.²

was at all necessary to open his eyes to the absurdity of the *real presence*; or that he would not at once have perceived the futility of appealing to our senses or to our reason, against an article of faith which professedly disclaims the authority of both.

¹“Chaste dans ses mœurs, grave dans ses discours, sobre dans ses alimens, austère dans son genre de vie.” (Portrait de Bayle par M. Saurin, dans son Sermon sur l'accord de la religion avec la politique.)

² In justice to Bayle, and also to Gibbon, it should be remembered, that over the most offensive passages in their works they have drawn the veil of the learned languages. It was reserved for the translators of the *Historical and Critical Dictionary* to tear this veil asunder, and to expose the indelicacy of their author to every curious eye. It is impossible to observe the patient industry and fidelity with which they have executed this part of their task, without feelings of indignation and disgust. For such an outrage on taste and decorum, their te-

On the mischievous tendency of Bayle's work to unsettle the principles of superficial readers, and (what is worse) to damp the moral enthusiasm of youth, by shaking their faith in the reality of virtue, it would be superfluous to enlarge. The fact is indisputable, and is admitted even by his most partial admirers. It may not be equally useless to remark the benefits which (whether foreseen or not by the author, is of little consequence) have actually resulted to literature from his indefatigable labours. One thing will, I apprehend, be very generally granted in his favour, that, if he has taught men to suspend their judgment, he has taught them also to think and to reason for themselves; a lesson which appeared to a late philosophical divine of so great importance, as to suggest to him a doubt, whether it would not be better for authors to state nothing but *premises*, and to leave to their readers the task of forming their own *conclusions*.¹ Nor can Bayle be candidly accused of often discovering a partiality for any particular sect of philosophers. He opposes Spinoza and Hobbes with the same spirit and ability, and apparently with the same good faith, with which he controverts the doctrines of Anaxagoras and of Plato. Even the ancient sceptics, for whose mode of philosophizing he might be supposed to have felt some degree of tenderness, are treated with as little ceremony as the most extravagant of the dogmatists. He has been often accused of a leaning to the most absurd of all systems, that of the Manicheans; and it must be owned, that there is none in defence of which he has so often and so ably²

dious and feeble attacks on the Manicheism of Bayle offer but a poor compensation. Of all Bayle's suspected heresies, it was perhaps that which stood the least in need of a serious refutation; and, if the case had been otherwise, their incompetency to contend with such an adversary would have only injured the cause which they professed to defend.

¹ See the preface to Bishop Butler's Sermons.

² Particularly in the article entitled *Paulicians*.

exerted his talents ; but it is easy to perceive, that, when he does so, it is not from any serious faith which he attaches to it (perhaps the contrary supposition would be nearer the truth,) but from the peculiarly ample field which it opened for the display of his controversial subtlety, and of his inexhaustible stores of miscellaneous information.¹ In one passage he has pronounced with a tone of decision which he seldom assumes, that “it is absurd, indefensible, and inconsistent with the regularity and order of the universe ; that the arguments in favour of it are liable to be retorted ; and that, granting it to be true, it would afford no solution of the difficulties in question.”² The apparent zeal with which, on various occasions, he has taken up its defence, may, I think, be reasonably accounted for, by the favourable opportunity it afforded him of measuring his logical powers with those of Leibnitz.³

¹ One of the earliest as well as the ablest of those who undertook a reply to the passages in Bayle which *seem* to favour Manicheism, candidly acquits him of any serious design to recommend that system to his readers. “En répondant aux objections Manichéennes, je ne prétends faire aucun tort à M. Bayle : qui je ne soupçonne nullement de les favoriser. Je suis persuadé qu’il n’a pris la liberté philosophique de dire, en bien des rencontres, le pour et le contre, sans rien dissimuler, que pour donner de l’exercice à ceux que entendent les matières qu’il traite, et non pour favoriser ceux dont il explique les raisons.” (*Parrhasiana, ou Pensées Diverses*, p. 302, par M. Le Clerc, Amsterdam, 1699.)

² See the illustration upon the Sceptics at the end of the Dictionary.

³ This supposition may be thought inconsistent with the well known fact, that the Theodicée of Leibnitz was not published till after the death of Bayle. But it must be recollected, that Bayle had previously entered the lists with Leibnitz in the article *Rorarius*, where he had urged some very acute and forcible objections against the scheme of *pre-established harmony* ; a scheme which leads so naturally and obviously to that of optimism, that it was not difficult to foresee what ground Leibnitz was likely to take in defending his principles. The great aim of Bayle seems to have been to provoke Leibnitz to unfold *the*

To these considerations it may be added, that, in consequence of the progress of the sciences since Bayle's time, the unlimited scepticism commonly, and perhaps justly imputed to him, is much less likely to mislead than it was a century ago ; while the value of his researches, and of his critical reflections, becomes every day more conspicuous, in proportion as more enlarged views of nature, and of human affairs, enable us to combine together that mass of rich but indigested materials, in the compilation of which his own opinions and principles seem to have been totally lost. Neither comprehension, indeed, nor generalization, nor metaphysical depth,¹ are to be numbered among the characteristic attributes of his genius. Far less does he ever anticipate, by the moral lights of the soul, the slow and hesitating decisions of the understanding ; or touch with a privileged hand those mysterious chords to which all the social sympathies of our frame are responsive. Had his ambition, however, been more exalted, or his philanthropy more warm and diffusive, he would probably have attempted less than he actually accomplished ; nor would he have stooped to enjoy that undisputed pre-eminence which the public voice has now unanimously assigned him, among those inestimable though often ill-requited authors, whom Johnson has called " the pioneers of literature."

whole of his system and of its necessary consequences ; well knowing what advantages in the management of such a controversy would be on the side of the assailant.

The tribute paid by Leibnitz to the memory of his illustrious antagonist deserves to be quoted. " Sperandum est, *Bælium* luminibus illis nunc circumdari, quod terris negatum est : cum credibile sit, bonam voluntatem ei nequaquam defuisse."

"Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi,
Sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis."

¹ I speak of that metaphysical *depth* which is the exclusive result of what Newton called *Patient Thinking*. In logical quickness, and metaphysical subtlety, Bayle has never been surpassed.

The suspense of judgment which Bayle's *Dictionary* inspires with respect to *facts*, is, perhaps, still more useful than that which it encourages in matters of abstract reasoning. Fontenelle certainly went much too far, when he said of history, that it was only a collection of *Fables Convenues*;—a most significant and happy phrase, to which I am sorry that I cannot do justice in an English version. But, though Fontenelle pushed his maxim to an extreme, there is yet a great deal of important truth in the remark; and of this I believe every person's conviction will be stronger, in proportion as his knowledge of men and of books is profound and extensive.

Of the various lessons of historical scepticism to be learned from Bayle, there is none more practically valuable (more especially in such revolutionary times as we have witnessed) than that which relates to the biographical portraits of distinguished persons, when drawn by their theological and political opponents. In illustration of this, I have only to refer to the copious and instructive extracts which he has produced from Roman Catholic writers, concerning the lives, and still more concerning the deaths, of Luther, Knox,¹ Buchanan, and various other leaders or partizans of the Reformation. It would be impossible for any well-informed Protestant to read these extracts, without indulging a smile at their incredible absurdity, if every feeling of levity were not lost in a sentiment of deep indignation at the effrontery and falsehood of their authors. In stating this observation, I have taken my examples from Roman Catholic libellers, without any illiberal prejudices against the members of that church. The injustice done by Protestants to some of the conscientious defenders of the old faith has been, in all probability, equally great; but this we have no opportunity of ascertaining here, by the same direct evidence to which we

¹ See Note (Y.)

can fortunately appeal, in vindication of the three characters mentioned above. With the history of *two* of them every person in this country is fully acquainted; and I have purposely selected them in preference to others, as their *names* alone are sufficient to cover with disgrace the memory of their calumniators.¹

A few years before the death of Bayle, Fontenelle began to attract the notice of Europe.² I class them together on account of the mighty influence of both on the literary taste of their contemporaries; an influence in neither case founded on any claims to original genius, or to important improvements; but on the attractions which they possessed in common (though in very different ways) as popular writers; and on the easy and agreeable access which their works opened to the opinions and speculations of the learned. Nor do I depart so far, as might at first be supposed, from the order of chronology, in passing from the one to the other. For though Fontenelle survived almost to our own times (having very nearly completed a century at the time of his death), the interval between his birth and that of Bayle was only ten years, and he had actually published

¹ Of all Bayle's works, "the most useful and the least sceptical," according to Gibbon, "is his *Commentaire Philosophique* on these words of the Gospel, *Compel them to come in.*"

The great object of this commentary is to establish the general principles of Toleration, and to remonstrate with the members of Protestant churches on the inconsistency of their refusing to those they esteem heretics, the same indulgence which they claim for themselves in Catholic countries. The work is diffuse and rambling, like all Bayle's compositions; but the matter is excellent, and well deserves the praise which Gibbon has bestowed on it.

² Bayle died in 1706. Fontenelle's first work in prose (*the Dialogues of the Dead*) was published as early as 1683, and was quickly followed by his *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*.

several volumes, both in prose and verse, before the *Dictionary* of Bayle appeared.

But my chief reason for connecting Fontenelle rather with the contemporaries of his youth than with those of his old age is, that, during the latter part of his life, he was left far behind in his philosophical creed (for he never renounced his faith as a Cartesian ¹) by those very pupils to whose minds he had given so powerful an impulse, and whom he had so long taught by his example, the art (till then unknown in modern times) of blending the truths of the severer sciences with the lights and graces of eloquence. Even this *eloquence*, once so much admired, had ceased, before his death, to be regarded as a model, and was fast giving way to the purer and more manly taste in writing, recommended by the precepts, and exemplified in the historical compositions of Voltaire.

Fontenelle was a nephew of the great Corneille; but his genius was, in many respects, very strongly contrasted with that of the author of the *Cid*. Of this he has himself enabled us to judge, by the feeble and unsuccessful attempts in dramatic poetry, by which he was first known to the world.

¹ Excepting on a few metaphysical points. The chief of these were, the question concerning the origin of our ideas, and that relating to the nature of the lower animals. On the former of these subjects he has said explicitly: “L’Ancienne Philosophie n’a pas toujours eu tort. Elle a soutenu que tout ce qui étoit dans l’esprit avoit *passé par les sens*, et nous n’aurions pas mal fait de conserver cela d’elle.” (*Fragment of an intended Treatise on the Human Mind*.) On another occasion, he states his own opinion on this point, in language coinciding exactly with that of Gassendi. “A force d’opérer sur les premières idées formées par les sens, d’y ajouter, d’en retrancher, de les rendre de particulières universelles, d’universelles plus universelles encore, l’esprit les rend si différentes de ce qu’elles étoit d’abord qu’on a quelquefois peine à reconnaître leur origine. Cependant qui voudra prendre le fil et le suivre exactement, retournera toujours de l’idée la plus sublime et la plus élevée, à quelque idée sensible et grossière.”

In these, indeed, as in all his productions, there is an abundance of ingenuity, of elegance, and of courtly refinement; but not the faintest vestige of the *mens divinator*, or of that sympathy with the higher and nobler passions, which enabled Corneille to reanimate and to reproduce on the stage the heroes of ancient Rome. The circumstance, however, which more peculiarly marks and distinguishes his writings, is the *French mould* in which education and habit seem to have recast all the original features of his mind;—identifying, at the same time, so perfectly the impressions of art with the workmanship of nature, that one would think the PARISIAN, as well as the MAN, had started fresh and finished from her creative hand. Even in his *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, the dry discussions with the Marchioness about the now forgotten vortices of Descartes, are enlivened throughout by a never-failing spirit of light and national gallantry, which will for ever render them an amusing picture of the manners of the times, and of the character of the author. The gallantry, it must be owned, is often strained and affected; but the affectation sits so well on Fontenelle, that he would appear less easy and graceful without it.

The only other production of Fontenelle's youth which deserves to be noticed is his *History of Oracles*; a work of which the aim was, to combat the popular belief that the oracles of antiquity were uttered by evil spirits, and that all these spirits became dumb at the moment of the Christian æra. To this work Fontenelle contributed little more than the agreeable and lively form in which he gave it to the world; the chief materials being derived from a dull and prolix dissertation on the same subject, by a learned Dutchman. The publication excited a keen opposition among divines, both Catholic and Protestant; and, in particular, gave occasion to a very angry, and (it is said) not contemptible criticism, from a member of the Society of Jesuits.¹ It

¹To this criticism, the only reply made by Fontenelle was a single sentence, which he addressed to a *Journalist* who had

is mentioned by La Harpe, as an illustration of the rapid change in men's opinions which took place during Fontenelle's life, that a book which, in his youth, was censured for its impiety, was regarded before his death as a proof of his respect for religion.

The most solid basis of Fontenelle's fame is his *History of the Academy of Sciences*, and his *Eloges of the Academicians*. Both of these works, but more especially the latter, possess, in an eminent degree, all the charms of his former publications, and are written in a much simpler and better taste than any of the others. The materials, besides, are of inestimable value, as succinct and authentic records of one of the most memorable periods in the history of the human mind; and are distinguished by a rare impartiality towards the illustrious dead, of all countries, and of all persuasions. The philosophical reflections, too, which the author has most skillfully interwoven with his literary details, discover a depth and justness of understanding far beyond the promise of his juvenile Essays; and afford many proofs of the soundness of his logical views,² as well as of his acute and fine discrimina-

urged him to take up arms in his own defence. "Je laisserai mon censeur jouir en paix de son triomphe; je consens que le diable ait été prophète, puisque le Jesuite le veut, et qu'il croit cela plus orthodoxe." (D'Alembert, *Eloge de la Motte*.) We are told by D'Alembert, that the silence of Fontenelle, on this occasion, was owing to the advice of La Motte. "Fontenelle bien tenté de terrasser son adversaire par la facilité qu'il y trouvoit, fut retenu par les avis prudens de la Motte; cet ami lui fit craindre de s'aliéner par sa réponse une société qui s'appeloit *Légion*, quand on avoit affaire au dernier de ses membres." The advice merits the attention of philosophers in all countries, for the spirit of Jesuitism is not confined to the Church of Rome.

² An instance of this which happens at present to recur to my memory, may serve to illustrate and to confirm the above remark. It is unnecessary to point out its coincidence with the views which gave birth to the new nomenclature in chemistry.

"If languages had been the work of philosophers, they might certainly be more easily learned. Philosophers would have established everywhere a systematical uniformity, which would

tion of the varieties and shades of character, both intellectual and moral.

The chief and distinguishing merit of Fontenelle, as the historian of the Academy, is the happy facility with which he adapts the most abstruse and refined speculations to the comprehension of ordinary readers. Nor is this excellence purchased by any sacrifice of scientific precision. What he aims at is nothing more than an outline; but this outline is always executed with the firm and exact hand of a master. "When employed in composition (he has somewhere said) my first concern is to be certain that I myself understand what I am about to write;" and on the utility of this practice every page of his Historical Memoirs may serve as a comment.¹

As a writer of *Eloges*, he has not been equalled (if I may be allowed to hazard my own opinion) by any of his countrymen. Some of those, indeed, by D'Alembert and by Condorcet, manifest powers of a far higher order than belonged to Fontenelle; but neither of these writers possessed Fon-

have proved a safe and infallible guide; and the manner of forming a derivative word, would, as a necessary consequence, have suggested its signification. The uncivilized nations, who are the first authors of languages, fell naturally into that notion with respect to certain *terminations*, all of which have some common property or virtue; but that advantage, unknown to those who had it in their hands, was not carried to a sufficient extent."

¹ From this praise, however, must be excepted, the mysterious jargon in which (after the example of some of his contemporaries) he has indulged himself in speaking of the geometry and calculus of infinites. "Nous le disons avec peine (says D'Alembert), et sans vouloir outrager les manes d'un homme célèbre qui n'est plus, il n'y a peut-être point d'ouvrage où l'on trouve des preuves plus fréquentes de l'abus de la métaphysique, que dans l'ouvrage très connu de M. Fontenelle, qui a pour titre *Elémens de la Géométrie de l'infini*; ouvrage dont la lecture est d'autant plus dangereuse aux jeunes géomètres que l'auteur y présente les sophismes avec une sorte d'élégance et de grace, dont le sujet ne paroissoit pas susceptible." *Mélanges*, &c. Tom. V. p. 264.)

tenelle's incommunicable art of interesting the curiosity and the feelings of his readers in the fortunes of every individual whom he honoured by his notice. In this art it is not improbable that they might have succeeded better, had they imitated Fontenelle's self-denial in sacrificing the fleeting praise of brilliant colouring, to the fidelity and lasting effect of their portraits; a self-denial which in *him* was the more meritorious, as his great ambition plainly was to unite the reputation of a *bel-esprit* with that of a philosopher. A justly celebrated academician of the present times (M. Cuvier), who has evidently adopted Fontenelle as his model, has accordingly given an interest and truth to his *Eloges*, which the public had long ceased to expect in that species of composition.¹

But the principal charm of Fontenelle's *Eloges* arises from the pleasing pictures which they everywhere present of genius and learning in the scenes of domestic life. In this respect, it has been justly said of them by M. Suard,² that "they form the noblest monument ever raised to the glory of the sciences and of letters." Fontenelle himself, in his *Eloge of Varignon*, after remarking, that in *him* the simplicity of his character was only equalled by the superiority of his talents, finely adds, "I have already bestowed so often

¹ D'Alembert, in his ingenious parallel of Fontenelle and La Motte, has made a remark on Fontenelle's style when he aims at simplicity, of the justness of which *French* critics alone are competent judges. "L'un et l'autre ont écrit en prose avec beaucoup de clarté, d'élégance, de simplicité même; mais La Motte avec une simplicité plus naturelle, et Fontenelle avec une simplicité plus étudiée: Car la simplicité peut l'être, et dès lors elle devient manière, et cesse d'être modèle." An idea very similar to this is happily expressed by Congreve, in his portrait of *Amoret*:

Coquet and Coy at once her air,
Both studied, though both seem neglected;
Careless she is with artful care,
Affecting to seem unaffected.

² *Notice sur la Vie et les Ecrits du Docteur Robertson.* (Paris, 1817.)

the same praise on other members of this Academy, that it may be doubted whether it is not less due to the individuals, than to the sciences which they cultivated in common." What a proud reply does this reflection afford to the Machiavellian calumniators of philosophy!

The influence of these two works of Fontenelle on the studies of the rising generation all over Europe, can be conceived by those alone who have compared them with similar productions of an earlier date. Sciences which had long been immured in colleges and cloisters, began at length to breathe the ventilated and wholesome air of social life. The union of philosophy and the fine arts, so much boasted of in the schools of ancient Greece, seemed to promise a speedy and invigorated revival. Geometry, Mechanics, Physics, Metaphysics, and Morals, became objects of pursuit in courts and in camps; the accomplishments of a scholar grew more and more into repute among the other characteristics of a gentleman: and (what was of still greater importance to the world) the learned discovered the secret of cultivating the graces of writing, as a necessary passport to truth, in a refined but dissipated age.

Nor was this change of manners confined to one of the sexes. The other sex, to whom nature has entrusted the first developement of our intellectual and moral powers, and who may, therefore, be regarded as the chief *medium* through which the progress of the mind is continued from generation to generation, shared also largely in the general improvement. Fontenelle aspired above all things to be the philosopher of the Parisian circles; and certainly contributed not a little to diffuse a taste for useful knowledge among women of all conditions in France, by bringing it into vogue among the higher classes. A reformation so great and so sudden could not possibly take place, without giving birth to much affectation, extravagance, and folly; but the whole analogy of human affairs encourages us to hope, that the inconveni-

ences and evils connected with it will be partial and temporary, and its beneficial results permanent and progressive.¹

¹ Among the various other respects in which Fontenelle contributed to the intellectual improvement of his countrymen, it ought to be mentioned, that he was one of the first writers in France who diverted the attention of metaphysicians from the old topics of scholastic discussion, to a philosophical investigation of the principles of the fine arts. Various original hints upon these subjects are scattered over his works; but the most favourable specimens of his talents for this very delicate species of analysis are to be found in his *Dissertation on Pastorals*, and in his *Theory concerning the Delight we derive from Tragedy*.^{*} His speculations, indeed, are not always just and satisfactory; but but they are seldom deficient in novelty or refinement. Their principal fault, perhaps, arises from the author's disposition to carry his refinements too far; in consequence of which, his theories became chargeable with that sort of sublimated ingenuity which the French epithet *Alambiqué* expresses more precisely and forcibly than any word in our language.

Something of the same philosophical spirit may be traced in Fenelon's *Dialogues on Eloquence*, and in his *Letter on Rhetoric and Poetry*. The former of these treatises, besides its merits as a speculative discussion, contains various practical hints, well entitled to the attention of those who aspire to eminence as public speakers; and of which the most apparently trifling claim some regard, as the results of the author's reflections upon an art which few ever practised with greater success.

Let me add, that both of these eminent men (who may be regarded as the fathers of philosophical criticism in France) were zealous partizans and admirers of the Cartesian metaphysics. It is this *critical* branch of metaphysical science which, in my opinion, has been most successfully cultivated by French writers; although too many of them have been infected (after the example of Fontenelle) with the disease of sickly and of *hyper-metaphysical* subtlety.

From this censure, however, must be excepted the Abbé Dubos, whose *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting* is one of the most agreeable and instructive works that can be put into the hands of youth. Few books are better calculated for leading their minds gradually from literature to philosophy. The author's theories, if not always profound or just, are in general

^{*} In the judgment of Mr. Hume, "there is not a finer piece of criticism than Fontenelle's *Dissertation on Pastorals*; in which, by a number of reflections and philosophical reasonings, he endeavours to fix the just medium between Simplicity and Refinement, which is suitable to that species of poetry."

Among the various moral defects imputed to Fontenelle, that of a complete apathy and insensibility to all concerns but his own is by far the most prominent. A letter of the Baron de Grimm, written immediately after Fontenelle's death, but not published till lately, has given a new circulation in this country to some anecdotes injurious to his memory, which had long ago fallen into oblivion or contempt in France. The authority, however, of this adventurer, who earned his subsistence by collecting and retailing, for the amusement of a German Prince, the literary scandal of Paris, is not much to be relied on in estimating a character with which he does not appear to have had any opportunity of becoming personally acquainted; more especially as, during Fontenelle's long decline, the great majority of men of letters in France were disposed to throw his merits into the shade, as an acceptable homage to the rising and more dazzling glories of Voltaire.¹ It is in the

marked with good sense as well as with ingenuity; and the subjects to which they relate are so peculiarly attractive, as to fix the attention even of those readers who have but little relish for speculative discussions. "Ce qui fait la bonté de cet ouvrage (says Voltaire) c'est qu'il n'y a que peu d'erreurs, et beaucoup de réflexions vraies, nouvelles, et profondes. Il manque cependant d'ordre et sur-tout de précision; il auroit pu être écrit avec plus de feu, de grace et d'élégance; mais l'écrivain pense et fait penser." (*Siècle de Louis XIV.*)

¹ As to Voltaire himself, it must be mentioned, to his honour, that though there seems never to have been much cordiality between him and Fontenelle, he had yet the magnanimity to give a place to this Nestor of French literature in his catalogue of the eminent persons who adorned the reign of Louis XIV.; a tribute of respect the more flattering, as it is the single instance in which he has departed from his general rule of excluding from his list the names of all his living contemporaries. Even Fontenelle's most devoted admirers ought to be satisfied with the liberality of Voltaire's eulogy, in which, after pronouncing Fontenelle "the most universal genius which the age of Louis XIV. had produced," he thus sums up his merits as an author: "Enfin on l'a regardé comme le premier des hommes

Academical Memoirs of D'Alembert and Condorcet (neither of whom can be suspected of any unjust prejudice against Voltaire, but who were both too candid to sacrifice truth to party feelings) that we ought to search for Fontenelle's real portrait :¹ Or rather (if it be true, as Dr. Hutcheson has somewhere remarked, that "men have commonly the good or bad qualities which they ascribe to mankind") the most faithful *Eloge* on Fontenelle himself is to be found in those which he has pronounced upon others.

That the character of Fontenelle would have been more amiable and interesting, had his virtues been less the result of cold and prudent calculation, it is impossible to dispute. But his conduct through life was pure and blameless ; and

dans l'art nouveau de repandre de la lumière et des graces sur les sciences abstraites, et il a eu du merite dans tous les autres genres qu'il a traités. Tant de talens ont été soutenus par la connoissance des langues et de l'histoire, et il a été sans contredit au-dessus de tous les sçavans qui n'ont pas eu le don de l'invention."

¹ Condorcet has said expressly, that his apathy was confined entirely to what regarded himself ; and that he was always an active, though frequently a concealed friend, where his good offices could be useful to those who deserved them. "On a cru Fontenelle insensible, parce que sachant maîtriser les mouvemens de son âme il se conduisoit d'après son esprit, toujours juste et toujours sage. D'ailleurs, il avoit consenti sans peine à conserver cette réputation d'insensibilité ; il avoit souffert les plaisanteries de ses sociétés sur sa froideur, sans chercher à les détromper, parce que, bien sur que les vraies amis n'en seroit pas la dupe, il voyoit dans cette réputation un moyen commode de se délivrer des indifférens sans blesser leur amour propre." (*Eloge de Fontenelle, par Condorcet.*)

Many of Fontenelle's sayings, the import of which must have depended entirely on circumstances of time and place unknown to us, have been absurdly quoted to his disadvantage, in their literal and most obvious acceptation. "I hate war (said he), for it spoils conversation." Can any just inference be drawn from the levity of this convivial sally, against the humanity of the person who uttered it ? Or rather, when connected with the characteristic *finesse* of Fontenelle's wit, does it not lead to a conclusion precisely opposite ?

the happy serenity of his temper, which prolonged his life till he had almost completed his hundredth year, served as the best comment on the spirit of that mild and benevolent philosophy, of which he had laboured so long to extend the empire.

It is a circumstance almost singular in his history, that, since the period of his death, his reputation, both as a man and as an author, has been gradually rising. The fact has been as remarkably the reverse with most of those who have calumniated his memory.

While the circle of mental cultivation was thus rapidly widening in France, a similar progress was taking place, upon a larger scale, and under still more favourable circumstances, in England. To this progress nothing contributed more powerfully than the periodical papers published under various titles by Addison¹ and his associates. The effect of these in reclaiming the public taste from the licentiousness and grossness introduced into England at the period of the Restoration; in recommending the most serious and important truths by the united attractions of wit, humour, imagination, and eloquence; and, above all, in counteracting those superstitious terrors which the weak and ignorant are so apt to mistake for religious and moral impressions—has been remarked by numberless critics, and is acknowledged even by those who “felt no undue partiality in favour of the authors.”² Some of the papers of Addison, however, are of an order still higher, and bear marks of a mind which, if early and steadily turned to philosophical pursuits, might have accomplished much more than it ventured to undertake. His frequent references to the *Essay on Human Understand-*

¹ Born in 1672, died in 1719.

² See Pope's *Imitations of Horace*, Book II. Epistle I. “Unhappy Dryden,” &c. &c.

ing, and the high encomiums with which they are always accompanied, show how successfully he had entered into the spirit of that work; and how completely he was aware of the importance of its object. The popular nature of his publications, indeed, which rendered it necessary for him to avoid everything that might savour of scholastic or of metaphysical discussion, has left us no means of estimating his philosophical depth, but what are afforded by the *results* of his thoughts on the particular topics which he has occasion to allude to, and by some of his incidental comments on the scientific merits of preceding authors. But these means are sufficiently ample to justify a very high opinion of his sound and unprejudiced judgment, as well as of the extent and correctness of his literary information. Of his powers as a logical reasoner he has not enabled us to form an estimate; but none of his contemporaries seem to have been more completely tinctured with all that is most valuable in the metaphysical and ethical systems of his time.¹

But what chiefly entitles the name of Addison to a place in this Discourse, is his *Essays on the Pleasures of*

¹ I quote the following passage from Addison, *not* as a specimen of his metaphysical acumen, but as a proof of his good sense in divining and obviating a difficulty which I believe most persons will acknowledge occurred to themselves when they first entered on metaphysical studies:—

“Although we divide the soul into several powers and faculties, there is no such division in the soul itself. since it is *the whole soul* that remembers, understands, wills, or imagines. Our manner of considering the memory, understanding, will, imagination, and the like faculties, is for the better enabling us to express ourselves in such abstracted subjects of speculation, not that there is any such division in the soul itself.” In another part of the same paper, Addison observes, that “what we call the faculties of the soul, are only the different ways or modes in which the soul can exert herself.” (*Spectator*, No. 600.)

For some important remarks on the words, *Powers* and *Faculties*, as applied to the Mind, see Locke, B. II. ch. xxi § 20.

Imagination ; the first attempt in England to investigate the principles of the fine arts ; and an attempt which, notwithstanding many defects in the execution, is entitled to the praise of having struck out a new avenue to the study of the human mind, more alluring than any which had been opened before. In this respect, it forms a most important supplement to Locke's *Survey of the Intellectual Powers* ; and it has, accordingly, served as a text, on which the greater part of Locke's disciples have been eager to offer their comments and their corrections. The progress made by some of these in exploring this interesting region has been great ; but let not Addison be defrauded of his claims as a discoverer.

Similar remarks may be extended to the hints suggested by Addison on Wit, on Humour, and on the Causes of Laughter. It cannot, indeed, be said of him, that he exhausted any one of these subjects ; but he had at least the merit of starting them as Problems for the consideration of philosophers ; nor would it be easy to name among his successors, a single writer, who has made so important a step towards their solution, as the original proposer.

The philosophy of the papers, to which the foregoing observations refer, has been pronounced to be slight and superficial, by a crowd of modern metaphysicians who were but ill entitled to erect themselves into judges on such a question.¹ The singular simplicity and perspicuity of Addison's style have contributed much to the prevalence of this prejudice. Eager for the instruction, and unambitious of the admiration of the multitude, he everywhere studies to bring himself down to their level ; and even when he thinks with the greatest originality, and writes with the most inimitable felicity, so easily do we enter into the train of his ideas, that we can hardly persuade ourselves that we could

¹ See Note (Z.)

not have thought and written in the same manner. He has somewhere said of "fine writing," that it "consists of sentiments which are natural, without being obvious:" and his definition has been applauded by Hume, as at once concise and just. Of the thing defined, his own periodical essays exhibit the most perfect examples.

To this simplicity and perspicuity, the wide circulation which his works have so long maintained among all classes of readers, is in a great measure to be ascribed. His periods are not constructed, like those of Johnson, to "elevate and surprise," by filling the ear and dazzling the fancy; but we close his volumes with greater reluctance, and return to the perusal of them with far greater alacrity. Franklin, whose fugitive publications on political topics have had so extraordinary an influence on public opinion, both in the Old and New Worlds, tells us that his style in writing was formed upon the model of Addison: Nor do I know anything in the history of his life which does more honour to his shrewdness and sagacity. The copyist, indeed, did not possess the gifted hand of his master,—*Museo contingens cuncta lepore*;—but such is the effect of his plain and seemingly artless manner, that the most profound conclusions of political economy assume, in his hands, the appearance of indisputable truths; and some of them, which had been formerly confined to the speculative few, are already current in every country of Europe, as proverbial maxims.¹

To touch (however slightly) on Addison's other merits, as a critic, as a wit, as a speculative politician, and, above all, as a moralist, would lead me completely astray from

¹ The expressions "*Laissez nous faire*," and "*pas trop gouverner*," which comprise, in a few words, two of the most important lessons of Political Wisdom, are indebted chiefly for their extensive circulation to the short and luminous comments of Franklin. (See his *Political Fragments*, § 4.)

my present object. It will not be equally foreign to it to quote the two following short passages, which, though not, strictly *metaphysical*, are, both of them, the result of metaphysical habits of thinking, and bear a stronger resemblance than anything I recollect among the wits of Queen Anne's reign, to the best philosophy of the present age. They approach, indeed, very nearly to the philosophy of Turgot and of Smith.

“Among other excellent arguments for the immortality of the soul, there is one drawn from the perpetual progress of the soul to its perfection, without a possibility of ever arriving at it; which is a hint that I do not remember to have seen opened and improved by others who have written on this subject, though it seems to me to carry a great weight with it. A brute arrives at a point of perfection that he can never pass. In a few years he has all the endowments he is capable of; and were he to live ten thousand more, would be the same thing he is at present. Were a human soul thus at a stand in her accomplishments, were her faculties to be full-blown, and incapable of farther enlargement, I would imagine it might fall away insensibly, and drop at once into a state of annihilation. But can we believe a thinking being, that is in a perpetual progress of improvement, and travelling on from perfection to perfection, after having just looked abroad into the works of its Creator, and made a few discoveries of his infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, must perish at her first setting out, and in the very beginning of her inquiries?”¹

¹This argument has been prosecuted with great ingenuity and force of reasoning (blended, however, with some of the peculiarities of his Berkeleian metaphysics) by the late Dr. James Hutton (See his *Investigation of the Principles of Knowledge*, Vol. III. p. 195, *et seq.* Edin. 1794.)

The philosophy of the other passage is not unworthy of the author of the *Wealth of Nations*. The *thought* may be traced to earlier writers, but certainly it never was before presented with the same fulness and liveliness of illustration; nor do I know, in all Addison's works, a finer instance of his solicitude for the improvement of his fair readers, than the address with which he here insinuates one of the sublimest moral lessons, while apparently aiming only to amuse them with the geographical history of the muff and the tippet.

“Nature seems to have taken a particular care to disseminate her blessings among the different regions of the world, with an eye to the mutual intercourse and traffic among mankind; that the natives of the several parts of the globe might have a kind of dependance upon one another, and be united together by their common interest. Almost every *degree* produces something peculiar to it. The food often grows in one country, and the sauce in another. The fruits of Portugal are corrected by the products of Barbadoes; the infusion of a China plant, sweetened with the pith of an Indian cane. The Philippine Islands give a flavour to our European bowls. The single dress of a woman of quality is often the product of a hundred climates. The muff and the fan come together from the opposite ends of the earth. The scarf is sent from the torrid zone, and the tippet from beneath the pole. The brocade petticoat rises out of the mines of Peru, and the diamond necklace out of the bowels of Indostan.”

But I must not dwell longer on the fascinating pages of Addison. Allow me only, before I close them, to contrast the last extract with a remark of Voltaire, which, shallow and contemptible as it is, occurs more than once, both in verse and in prose, in his voluminous writings.

Il munit, a Moka, dans le sable Arabique,
Ce Caffé nécessaire aux pays des frimats ;
Il met la Fièvre en nos climats,
Et le remède en Amerique.

(*Epître au Roi du Prusse, 1750.*)

And yet Voltaire is admired as a philosopher by many who will smile to hear this title bestowed upon Addison !

It is observed by Akenside, in one of the notes to the *Pleasures of Imagination*, that “Philosophy and the Fine Arts can hardly be conceived at a greater distance from each other than at the Revolution, when Locke stood at the head of one party, and Dryden of the other.” He observes, also, that “a very great progress towards their reunion had been made within these few years.” To this progress the chief impulse was undoubtedly given by Addison and Shaftesbury.

Notwithstanding, however, my strong partiality for the former of these writers, I should be truly sorry to think, with Mr. Hume, that “Addison will be read with pleasure when Locke shall be *entirely forgotten*.” (*Essay on the Different Species of Philosophy.*)

A few years before the commencement of these periodical works, a memorable accession was made to metaphysical science, by the publication of Berkeley's *New Theory of Vision* ; and of his *Principles of Human Knowledge*. Possessed of a mind which, however inferior to that of Locke in depth of reflection and in soundness of judgment, was fully its equal in logical acuteness and invention, and in learning, fancy, and taste, far its superior,—Berkeley was singularly fitted to promote that reunion of Philosophy and of the Fine Arts which is so essential to the prosperity of both. Locke, we are told, despised poetry ; and we know from one of his own letters, that, among our English poets, his favourite author was Sir Richard

Blackmore. Berkeley, on the other hand, courted the society of all, from whose conversation and manners he could hope to add to the embellishments of his genius; and although himself a decided and High Church 'Tory,' lived in habits of friendship with Steele and Addison, as well as with Pope and Swift. Pope's admiration of him seems to have risen to a sort of enthusiasm. He yielded to Berkeley's decision on a very delicate question relating to the exordium of the *Essay on Man*; and on his moral qualities he has bestowed the highest and most unqualified eulogy to be found in his writings.

“Even in a Bishop I can spy desert,
Seeker is decent; Rundle has a heart;
Manners with candour are to Benson given;
To Berkeley every virtue under Heaven.”

With these intellectual and moral endowments, admired and blazoned as they were by the most distinguished wits of his age, it is not surprising that Berkeley should have given a popularity and fashion to metaphysical pursuits, which they had never before acquired in England. Nor was this popularity diminished by the boldness of some of his paradoxes: on the contrary, it was in no small degree the *effect* of them; the great bulk of mankind being always prone to mistake a singularity or eccentricity of thinking, for the originality of a creative genius.

The solid additions, however, made by Berkeley to the stock of human knowledge, were important and brilliant.

¹ See a volume of Sermons, preached in the chapel of Trinity College, Dublin. See also a Discourse addressed to Magistrates, &c. printed in 1736. In both of these publications, the author carries his 'Tory principles so far, as to represent the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance as an essential article of the Christian faith. “The Christian religion makes every legal constitution sacred, by commanding our submission thereto. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers*, saith St. Paul, *for the powers that be are ordained of God.*”

Among these, the first place is unquestionably due to his *New Theory of Vision*; a work abounding with ideas so different from those commonly received, and, at the same time, so profound and refined, that it was regarded by all but a few accustomed to deep metaphysical reflection, rather in the light of a philosophical romance, than of a sober inquiry after truth. Such, however, has been since the progress and diffusion of this sort of knowledge, that the leading and most abstracted doctrines contained in it, form now an essential part of every elementary treatise of optics, and are adopted by the most superficial smatterers in science as fundamental articles of their faith.

Of a theory, the outlines of which cannot fail to be familiar to a great majority of my readers, it would be wholly superfluous to attempt any explanation here, even if it were consistent with the limits within which I am circumscribed. Suffice it to observe, that its chief aim is to distinguish the immediate and natural objects of sight from the *seemingly instantaneous* conclusions which experience and habit teach us to draw from them in our earliest infancy; (or in the more concise metaphysical language of a later period) to draw the line between the *original* and the *acquired perceptions* of the eye. They who wish to study it in detail, will find ample satisfaction, and (if they have any relish for such studies) an inexhaustible fund of entertainment, in Berkeley's own short but masterly exposition of his principles, and in the excellent comments upon it by Smith of Cambridge; by Porterfield; by Reid; and, still more lately, by the author of the *Wealth of Nations*.¹

¹ By this excellent judge, Berkeley's *New Theory of Vision* is pronounced to be "one of the finest examples of Philosophical Analysis that is to be found in our own, or any other language." (*Essays on Philosophical Subjects*. Lond. 1795, p. 215.)

That this doctrine, with respect to the *acquired perceptions* of sight, was quite unknown to the best metaphysicians of antiquity, we have direct evidence in a passage of Aristotle's *Nicomachian Ethics*, where he states the distinction between those endowments which are the immediate gift of nature, and those which are the fruit of custom and habit. In the former class, he ranks the perceptions of sense, mentioning particularly the senses of seeing and of hearing. The passage (which I have transcribed in a *Note*) is curious, and seems to me decisive on the subject.¹

The misapprehensions of the ancients on this very obscure question will not appear surprising, when it is considered, that *forty* years after the publication of Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*, and *sixty* years after the date of Locke's *Essay*, the subject was so imperfectly understood in France, that Condillac (who is, to this day, very generally regarded by his countrymen as the father of genuine logic and metaphysics,) combated at great length the conclusions of the English philosophers concerning the *acquired* perceptions of sight; affirming, that "the eye judges *naturally* of figures, of magnitudes, of situations, and of distances." His argument in support of this opinion is to be found in the sixth section of his *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*.

It is difficult to suppose, that a person of mature years, who had read and studied Locke and Berkeley with as much

¹ Ου γαρ εκ τε πολλακις ιδειν, η πολλακις ακουσαι, τας αισθησεις ελαβομεν, αλλ' αναπαλιν, εχοντες εχρησαμεθα, & χρηταμενοι εχομεν. (*Ethic. Nicomach. Lib. ii. cap. 1.*)

"For it is not from seeing often, or from hearing often, that we get these senses; but, on the contrary, instead of getting them by using them, we use them because we have got them."

Had Aristotle been at all aware of the distinction so finely illustrated by Berkeley, instead of appealing to the perceptions of these two senses, as instances of endowments coëval with our birth, he would have quoted them as the most striking of all examples of the effects of Custom in apparently identifying our acquired powers with our original faculties.

care and attention as Condillac appears to have bestowed on them, should have reverted to this ancient and vulgar prejudice ; without suspecting that his metaphysical depth has been somewhat overrated by the world.¹ It is but justice, however, to Condillac, to add, that, in a subsequent work, he had the candour to acknowledge and to retract his error ; —a rare example of that disinterested love of truth, which is so becoming in a philosopher. I quote the passage (in a literal, though somewhat abridged version), not only to show, that, in the above statement, I have not misrepresented his opinion, but because I consider this remarkable circumstance in his literary history as a peculiarly amiable and honourable *trait* in his character.

“ We cannot recall to our memory the ignorance in which we were born : It is a state which leaves no trace behind it. We only recollect our ignorance of those things, the knowledge of which we recollect to have acquired ; and to remark what we acquire, some previous knowledge is necessary. That memory which now renders us so sensible of

¹ Voltaire, at an earlier period, had seized completely the scope of Berkeley's theory ; and had explained it with equal brevity and precision, in the following passage of his *Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy* :

“ Il faut absolument conclure, que les distances, les grandeurs, les situations ne sont pas, à proprement parler, des choses visibles, c'est à dire, ne sont pas les objets propres et immédiats de la vue. L'objet propre et immédiat de la vue n'est autre chose que la lumière colorée : tout le reste, nous ne le sentons qu'à la longue et par expérience. Nous apprenons à voir, précisément comme nous apprenons à parler et à lire. La différence est, que l'art de voir est plus facile, et que la nature est également à tous notre maître.

“ Les jugemens soudains, presque uniformes, que toutes nos âmes à un certain âge portent des distances des grandeurs, des situations, nous font penser, qu'il n'y a qu'à ouvrir les yeux pour voir la manière dont nous voyons. On se trompe, il y faut le secours des autres sens. Si les hommes n'avoient que le sens de la vue, ils n'auroient aucun moyen pour connaître l'étendue en longueur, largeur et profondeur, et un pur esprit ne la connoîtroit peut être, à moins que Dieu ne la lui révélât.”—*Phys. Newton, Chap. 7.*

the step from one acquisition to another, cannot remount to the first steps of the progress ; on the contrary, it supposes them already made ; and hence the origin of our disposition to believe them connate with ourselves. To say that we have learnt to see, to hear, to taste, to smell, to touch, appears a most extraordinary paradox. It seems to us that nature gave us the complete use of our senses the moment she formed them, and that we have always made use of them without study, because we are no longer obliged to study in order to use them. I retained these prejudices at the time I published my *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* ; the reasonings of Locke on a man born blind, to whom the sense of sight was afterwards given, did not undeceive me ; and *I maintained against this philosopher, that the eye judges naturally of figures, of sizes, of situations, and of distances.*” —Nothing short of his own explicit avowal could have convinced me, that a writer of so high pretensions and of such unquestionable ingenuity as Condillac, had really commenced his metaphysical career under so gross and unaccountable a delusion.

In bestowing the praise of originality on Berkeley’s *Theory of Vision*, I do not mean to say, that the *whole* merit of this Theory is exclusively his own. In this, as in most other cases, it may be presumed, that the progress of the human mind has been gradual : And, in point of fact, it will, on examination, be found, that Berkeley only took up the inquiry where Locke dropped it ; following out his principles to their remoter consequences, and placing them in so great a variety of strong and happy lights, as to bring a doctrine till *then* understood but by a few, within the reach of every intelligent and attentive reader. For my own part, on comparing these two philosophers together, I am at a loss whether most to admire the powerful and penetrating sagacity of the one, or the fertility of invention displayed in the illustrations of the other. What can be more clear and forcible than

the statement of Locke quoted in the Note below ; and what an idea does it convey of his superiority to Condillac, when it is considered, that he anticipated *à priori* the same doctrine which was afterwards confirmed by the fine analysis of Berkeley, and demonstrated by the judicious experiments of Cheselden ; while the French metaphysician, with all this accumulation of evidence before him, relapsed into a prejudice transmitted to modern times, from the very infancy of optical science !¹

¹“ We are farther to consider (says Locke,) concerning perception, that the ideas we receive by sensation are often in grown people altered by the judgment, without our taking notice of it. When we set before our eyes a round globe, of any uniform colour, *v. g.* gold, alabaster, or jet, it is certain that the idea thereby imprinted in our mind is of a flat circle, variously shadowed, with several degrees of light and brightness coming to our eyes. But we having by use been accustomed to perceive what kind of appearance convex bodies are wont to make in us, what alterations are made in the reflections of light by the difference of the sensible figure of bodies ; the judgment presently, by an habitual custom, alters the appearances into their causes, so that, from what truly is variety of shadow or colour, recollecting the figure, it makes it pass for a mark of figure, and frames to itself the perception of a convex figure, and an uniform colour ; when the idea we receive from thence is only a plane variously coloured, as is evident in painting. ****

“ But this is not, I think, usual in any of our ideas, but those received by sight ;* because sight, the most comprehensive of all our senses, conveying to our minds the ideas of lights and colours, which are peculiar only to that sense ; and also the far different ideas of space, figure, or motion, the several varieties whereof change the appearances of its proper objects, *viz.* light and colours, we bring ourselves by use to judge of the one by the other. This, in many cases, by a settled habit in things whereof we have frequent experience, is performed so constant-

* Mr. Locke might, however, have remarked something very *similar* to it in the perceptions of the ear ; a very large proportion of its appropriate objects being rather *judged of* than actually *perceived*. In the rapidity (for example) of common conversation, how many syllables, and even words, escape the notice of the most attentive hearer ; which syllables and words are so quickly supplied from the relation which they bear to the rest of the sentence, that it is quite impossible to distinguish between the audible and the inaudible sounds ! A very palpable instance of this occurs in the difficulty experienced by the most acute ear in catching *proper names* or arithmetical sums, or words borrowed from unknown tongues, the first time they are pronounced.

I believe it would be difficult to produce from any writer prior to Locke, an equal number of important facts relating to the intellectual phenomena, as well observed, and as unexceptionably described, as those which I have here brought under my reader's eye. It must appear evident, besides, to all who have studied the subject, that Locke has, in this passage, enunciated, in terms the most precise and decided, the same general conclusion concerning the effect of constant and early *habits*, which it was the great object of Berkeley's *Theory of Vision* to establish, and which, indeed, gives to that work its chief value, when considered in connection with the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

ly and so quick, that we take *that* for the perception of our sensation, which is an idea formed by our judgment; so that one, viz. that of sensation, serves only to excite the other, and is scarce taken notice of itself: as a man who reads or hears with attention or understanding, takes little notice of the characters or sounds, but of the ideas that are excited in him by them.

“Nor need we wonder that is done with so little notice, if we consider how very *quick* the actions of the mind are performed, for as itself is thought to take up no space, to have no extension; so its actions seem to require no time, but many of them seem to be crowded into an instant. I speak this in comparison to the actions of the body. Any one may easily observe this in his own thoughts, who will take the pains to reflect on them. How, as it were in an instant, do our minds with one glance see all the parts of a demonstration, which may very well be called a long one, if we consider the time it will require to put it into words, and step by step show it to another? Secondly, we shall not be so much surprised, that this is done in us with so little notice, if we consider how the facility which we get of doing things by a custom of doing makes them often pass in us without our notice. *Habits*, especially such as are begun very early, come at last to produce actions in us, which often escape our observations. How frequently do we in a day cover our eyes with our eye-lids, without perceiving that we are at all in the dark? Men that have by custom got the use of a by-word, do almost in every sentence pronounce sounds, which, though taken notice of by others, they themselves neither hear nor observe; and, therefore, it is not so strange, that our mind should often change the idea of its *sensation* into that of its *judgment*, and make one serve only to excite the other, without our taking notice of it.” (Locke's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 123, *et seq.*)

Berkeley himself, it is to be observed, by no means lays claim to that complete novelty in his *Theory of Vision*, which has been ascribed to it by many, who, in all probability, derived their whole information concerning it from the traditional and inexact transcripts of book-making historians. In the introductory sentences of his Essay, he states very clearly and candidly the conclusions of his immediate predecessors on this class of our perceptions; and explains, with the greatest precision, in what particulars his own opinion differs from theirs. "It is, I think, *agreed by all*, that distance, of itself, cannot be seen. For distance being a line directed end-wise to the eye, it projects only one point in the fund of the eye, which point remains invariably the same, whether the distance be longer or shorter.

"I find it also acknowledged, that the estimate we make of the distance of objects *considerably remote*, is rather an act of judgment grounded on *experience*, than of sense. For example, when I perceive a great number of intermediate objects, such as houses, fields, rivers, and the like, which I have experienced to take up a considerable space; I thence form a judgment or conclusion, that the object I see beyond them is at a great distance. Again, when an object appears faint and small, which, at a near distance, I have experienced to make a vigorous and large appearance, I instantly conclude it to be far off. And this, 'tis evident, is the result of *experience*; without which, from the faintness and littleness, I should not have inferred anything concerning the distance of objects.

"But when an object is placed at *so near a distance*, as that the interval between the eyes bears any sensible proportion to it, it is the received opinion, that the two optic axes, concurring at the object, do there make an angle, by means of which, according as it is greater or less, the object is perceived to be nearer or farther off.

"There is another way mentioned by the optic writers, whereby they will have us judge of those distances, in re-

spect of which the breadth of the pupil hath any sensible bigness ; and that is, the greater or less divergency of the rays, which, issuing from the visible point, do fall on the pupil ; that point being judged nearest, which is seen by most diverging rays, and that remoter, which is seen by less diverging rays."

These (according to Berkeley) are the "common and current accounts" given by *mathematicians* of our perceiving *near distances* by sight. He then proceeds to show, that they are unsatisfactory ; and that it is necessary, for the solution of this problem, to avail ourselves of principles borrowed from a higher philosophy : After which, he explains, in detail, his own theory concerning the *ideas* (*sensations*) which, by experience, become *signs* of distance ; ¹ or (to use his own phraseology) "by which distance is *suggested* ² to the mind."

¹ For assisting persons unaccustomed to metaphysical studies to enter into the spirit and scope of Berkeley's *theory*, the best illustration I know of is furnished by the phenomena of the *Phantasmagoria*. It is sufficient to hint at this application of these phenomena, to those who know anything of the subject.

² The word *suggest* is much used by Berkeley in this appropriate and technical sense, not only in his *Theory of Vision*, but in his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, and in his *Minute Philosopher*. It expresses, indeed, the cardinal principle on which his *Theory of Vision* hinges ; and is now so incorporated with some of our best metaphysical speculations, that one cannot easily conceive how the use of it was so long dispensed with. Locke (in the passage quoted in the Note, p. 107) uses the word *excite* for the same purpose ; but it seems to imply an hypothesis concerning the *mechanism* of the mind, and by no means expresses the fact in question with the same force and precision.

It is remarkable, that Dr. Reid should have thought it incumbent on him to apologize for introducing into philosophy a word so familiar to every person conversant with Berkeley's works. "I beg leave to make use of the word *suggestion*, because I know not one more proper to express a power of the mind, which seems entirely to have escaped the notice of philosophers, and to which we owe many of our simple notions which are neither impressions nor ideas, as well as many original princi-

The result of the whole is, that, “a man born blind, being made to see, would not at first have any idea of distance by sight. *The sun and stars, the remotest objects as well as the nearest, would all seem to be in his Eye, or rather in his Mind.*”¹

From this quotation it appears, that, before Berkeley's time, philosophers had advanced greatly beyond the point at which Aristotle stopped, and towards which Condillac, in his first publication, made a retrograde movement. Of this progress some of the chief steps may be traced as early as the twelfth century in the *Optics* of Alhazen; ² and they may be perceived still more clearly and distinctly in various optical writers since the revival of letters; particularly in the *Optica Promota* of James Gregory.³ Father Malebranche went still farther, and even anticipated some of the

ples of belief. I shall endeavour to explain, by an example, what I understand by this word. We all know that a certain kind of sound *suggests* immediately to the mind a coach passing in the street; and not only produces the imagination, but the belief, that a coach is passing. Yet there is no comparing of ideas, no perception of agreements or disagreements to produce this belief; nor is there the least similitude between the sound we hear, and the coach we imagine and believe to be passing.”

So far Dr. Reid's use of the word coincides exactly with that of Berkeley; but the former will be found to annex to it a meaning more extensive than the latter, by employing it to comprehend not only those *intimations* which are the result of experience and habit; but another class of *intimations* (quite overlooked by Berkeley), those which result from the original frame of the human mind. (See Reid's *Inquiry*, Chap. ii. sec. 7.)

¹ I request the attention of my readers to this last sentence, as I have little doubt that the fact here stated gave rise to the theory which Berkeley afterwards adopted, concerning the non-existence of the material world. It is not, indeed, surprising that a conclusion, so very curious with respect to the objects of sight, should have been, in the first ardour of discovery, too hastily extended to those qualities also which are the appropriate objects of touch.

² Alhazen, Lib. ii. NN. 10, 19, 39.

³ See the enl of Prop. 28.

metaphysical reasonings of Berkeley concerning the means by which experience enables us to judge of the distances of *near* objects. In proof of this, it is sufficient to mention the explanation he gives of the manner, in which a comparison of the perceptions of sight and of touch teaches us gradually to estimate by the eye, the distances of all those objects which are within reach of our hands, or of which we are accustomed to measure the distance, by walking over the intermediate ground.

In rendering this justice to earlier writers, I have no wish to detract from the originality of Berkeley. With the single exception, indeed, of the passage in Malebranche which I have just referred to, and which it is more than probable was unknown to Berkeley when his theory first occurred to him,¹ I have ascribed to his predecessors nothing more than what he has himself explicitly acknowledged to belong to them. All that I wished to do was, to supply some links in the historical chain, which he has omitted.

The influence which this justly celebrated work has had, not only in perfecting the theory of optics, but in illustrating the astonishing effects of early habit on the mental phenomena in general, will sufficiently account to my intelligent readers for the length to which the foregoing observations upon it have extended.

Next in point of importance to Berkeley's New Theory of Vision, which I regard as by far the most solid basis of his philosophical fame, may be ranked his speculations concerning the Objects of General Terms, and his celebrated argument against the existence of the Material World. On both of these questions I have elsewhere explained my own ideas so fully, that it would be quite superfluous for me to resume the consideration of them here.² In neither instance are

¹ Berkeley's *Theory* was published when he was only twenty-five; an age when it can scarcely be supposed that his metaphysical reading had been very extensive.

² See *Philosophical Essays*.

his reasonings so entirely original as has been commonly supposed. In the former, they coincide in substance, although with immense improvements in the form, with those of the scholastic nominalists, as revived and modified by Hobbes and Leibnitz. In the latter instance, they amount to little more than an ingenious and elegant developement of some principles of Malebranche, pushed to certain paradoxical but obvious consequences, of which Malebranche, though unwilling to avow them, appears to have been fully aware. These consequences, too, had been previously pointed out by Mr. Norris, a very learned divine of the Church of England, whose name has unaccountably failed in obtaining that distinction, to which his acuteness as a logician, and his boldness as a theorist, justly entitled him.¹

The great object of Berkeley in maintaining his system of idealism, it may be proper to remark in passing, was to cut up by the roots the scheme of materialism. "Matter (he

¹ Another very acute metaphysician of the same church (Arthur Collier, author of a *Demonstration of the Non-existence and Impossibility of an External World*) has met with still greater injustice. His name is not to be found in any of our Biographical Dictionaries. In point of date, his publication is some years posterior to that of Norris, and therefore it does not possess the same claims to originality; but it is far superior to it in logical closeness and precision, and is not obscured to the same degree with the mystical theology which Norris (after the example of Malebranche) connected with the scheme of Idealism. Indeed, when compared with the writings of Berkeley himself, it yields to them less in force of argument, than in composition and variety of illustration. The title of Collier's book is, *Clavis Universalis*, or a New Inquiry after Truth, being a Demonstration, &c. &c. By Arthur Collier, Rector of Langford Magna, near Sarum. (Lond. printed for Robert Gosling, at the Mitre and Crown, against St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street, 1713.) The motto prefixed by Collier to his work is from Malebranche, and is strongly characteristic both of the English and French *Inquirer after Truth*. "Vulgi assensus et approbatio circa materiam difficilem est certum argumentum falsitatis istius opinionis cui assentitur." (*Maleb. De Inquir. Verit. Lib. iii. p. 194.*) See Note (AA.)

tells us himself) being once *expelled out of nature*, drags with it so many sceptical and impious notions. * * * * Without it, your Epicureans, Hobbists, and the like, have not even the shadow of a pretence, but become the most cheap and easy triumph in the world.”

Not satisfied with addressing these abstract speculations to the learned, Berkeley conceived them to be of such moment to human happiness, that he resolved to bring them, if possible, within the reach of a wider circle of readers, by throwing them into the more popular and amusing form of dialogues.¹ The skill with which he has executed this very difficult and unpromising task cannot be too much admired. The characters of his speakers are strongly marked and happily contrasted; the illustrations exhibit a singular combination of logical subtilty and of poetical invention; and the style, while it everywhere abounds with the rich, yet sober colourings of the author’s fancy, is perhaps superior, in point of purity and of grammatical correctness, to any English composition of an earlier date.²

The impression produced in England by Berkeley’s Idealism was not so great as might have been expected; but the novelty of his paradoxes attracted very powerfully the attention of a set of young men who were then prosecuting their

¹ I allude here chiefly to *Alciphron*, or the *Minute Philosopher*; for as to the dialogues between *Hylas* and *Philonous*, they aspire to no higher merit than that of the common dialogues between A. and B.; being merely a compendious way of stating and of obviating the principal objections which the author anticipated to his opinions.

² Dr. Warton, after bestowing high praise on the *Minute Philosopher*, excepts from his encomium “those passages in the fourth dialogue, where the author has introduced his fanciful and whimsical opinions about vision.”—(*Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, Vol. II. p. 264.)—If I were called on to point out the most ingenious and original part of the whole work, it would be the argument contained in the passages here so contemptuously alluded to, by this learned and (on all questions of taste) most respectable critic.

studies at Edinburgh, and who formed themselves into a Society for the express purpose of soliciting from the author an explanation of some parts of his theory which seemed to them obscurely or equivocally expressed. To this correspondence the amiable and excellent prelate appears to have given every encouragement; and I have been told by the best authority, that he was accustomed to say, that his reasonings had been nowhere better understood than by this club of young Scotsmen.¹ The ingenious Dr. Wallace, author of the *Discourse on the Numbers of Mankind*, was one of the leading members; and with him were associated several other individuals, whose names are now well known and honourably distinguished in the learned world. Mr. Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, which was published in 1739, affords sufficient evidence of the deep impression which Berkeley's writings had left upon his Mind; and to this juvenile essay of Mr. Hume's may be traced the origin of the most important metaphysical works which Scotland has since produced.

It is not, however, my intention to prosecute farther, at present, the history of Scottish philosophy. The subject may be more conveniently, and I hope advantageously resumed, after a slight review of the speculations of some English and French writers, who, while they professed a general acquiescence in the doctrines of Locke, have attempted to modify his fundamental principles in a manner totally inconsistent with the views of their master. The remarks which I mean to offer on the modern French school will afford me, at the same time, a convenient opportunity of introducing some strictures on the metaphysical systems which have of late prevailed in other parts of the Continent.

¹ The authority I here allude to is that of my old friend and preceptor, Dr. John Stevenson, who was himself a member of the *Rankenian Club*, and who was accustomed for many years to mention this fact in his *Academical Prelections*.

SECTION V.

HARTLEYAN SCHOOL.

THE English writers to whom I have alluded in the last paragraph, I shall distinguish by the title of Dr. Hartley's School; for although I by no means consider this person as the first author of any of the theories commonly ascribed to him (the seeds of all of them having been previously sown in the university where he was educated), it was nevertheless reserved for him to combine them together, and to exhibit them to the world in the imposing form of a system.

Among the immediate predecessors of Hartley, Dr. Law, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, seems to have been chiefly instrumental in preparing the way for a schism among Locke's disciples. The name of Law was first known to the public by an excellent translation, accompanied by many learned, and some very judicious notes, of Archbishop King's work on the Origin of Evil; a work of which the great object was to combat the Optimism of Leibnitz, and the Manicheism imputed to Bayle. In making this work more generally known, the translator certainly rendered a most acceptable and important service to the world, and, indeed, it is upon this ground that his best claim to literary distinction is still founded.¹ In his own original speculations, he is weak, paradoxical, and oracular;² affecting, on all occasions, the

¹ King's argument in proof of the prevalence in this world, both of Natural and Moral Good, over the corresponding Evils, has been much and deservedly admired; nor are Law's Notes upon this head entitled to less praise. Indeed, it is in this part of the work that both the author and his commentator appear, in my opinion, to the greatest advantage.

² As instances of this I need only refer to the *first* and *third* of his Notes on King; the former of which relates to the word

most profound veneration of the opinions of Locke, but much more apt to attach himself to the errors and oversights of that great man, than to enter into the general spirit of his metaphysical philosophy.

To this translation, Dr. Law prefixed a Dissertation concerning the Fundamental Principle of Virtue, by the Reverend Mr. Gay ; a performance of considerable ingenuity, but which would now be entitled to little notice, were it not for the influence it appears to have had in suggesting to Dr. Hartley the possibility of accounting for all our intellectual pleasures and pains, by the single principle of the Association of Ideas. We are informed by Dr. Hartley himself, that it

substance ; and the latter to the dispute between Clarke and Leibnitz concerning *space*. His reasonings on both subjects are obscured by an affected use of hard and unmeaning words, ill becoming so devoted an admirer of Locke. The same remark may be extended to an *Inquiry into the Ideas of Space and Time*, published by Dr. Law in 1734.

The result of Law's speculations on Space and Time is thus stated by himself: "That our ideas of them do not imply any external *ideatum* or *objective* reality ; that these ideas (as well as those of *infinity* and *number*) are *universal* or *abstract* ideas, existing under that *formality* no where but in the mind ; nor affording a proof of any thing, but of the power which the mind has to form them." (Law's *Trans. of King*, p. 7. 4th edit.) This language, as we shall afterwards see, approaches very nearly to that lately introduced by Kant. Dr. Law's favourite author might have cautioned him against such jargon. (See *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book II. Chap. xiii. § 17, 18.)

The absurd application of the scholastic word *substance* to empty space ; an absurdity in which the powerful mind of Gravesande acquiesced many years after the publication of the *Essay on Human Understanding*, has probably contributed not a little to force some authors into the opposite extreme of maintaining, with Leibnitz and Dr. Law, that our idea of space does not imply any external *ideatum* or *objective* reality. Gravesande's words are these : "Substantiæ sunt aut cogitantes, aut non cogitantes ; cogitantes duas novimus, Deum et Mentem nostram : præter has et alias dari in dubium non revocamus. Duæ etiam substantiæ quæ non cogitant, nobis notæ sunt Spatium et Corpus."—Gravesande, *Introductio ad Philosophiam*, § 19.

was in consequence of hearing some account of the contents of this dissertation, he was first led to engage in those inquiries which produced his celebrated *Theory of Human Nature*.

The other principle on which this theory proceeds (that of the vibrations and vibraticuncles in the medullary substance of the brain) is also of Cambridge origin. It occurs in the form of a query in Sir Isaac Newton's *Optics* ; and a distinct allusion to it, as a principle likely to throw new light on the phenomena of mind, is to be found in the concluding sentence of Smith's *Harmonics*.

Very nearly about the time when Hartley's *Theory* appeared, Charles Bonnet of Geneva published some speculations of his own, proceeding almost exactly on the same assumptions. Both writers speak of vibrations (*ébranlemens*) in the nerves ; and both of them have recourse to a subtile and elastic ether, co-operating with the nerves in carrying on the communication between soul and body.¹ This fluid Bonnet conceived to be contained in the nerves, in a manner analogous to that in which the electric fluid is contained in the solid bodies which conduct it ; differing in this respect from the Cartesians as well as from the ancient physiologists, who considered the nerves as hollow tubes, or pipes, within which the animal spirits were included. It is to this elastic ether that Bonnet ascribes the vibrations of which he supposes the nerves to be susceptible ; for the nerves themselves (he justly observes) have no resemblance to the stretched cords of a musical instrument.² Hartley's *Theory* differs in

¹ *Essai Analytique de l'Ame*, Chap. v. See also the additional notes on the first chapter of the seventh part of the *Contemplation de la Nature*.

² “ Mais les nerfs sont mols, ils ne sont point tendus comme les cordes d'un instrument ; les objets y exciteroient-ils donc les vibrations analogues à celle d'une corde pincée ? Ces vibrations se communiqueroient-elles à l'instant au siège de l'ame ? La chose paroît difficile à concevoir. Mais si l'on admet dans les nerfs

one respect from this, as he speaks of vibrations and vibrations in the medullary substance of the brain and nerves. He agrees, however, with Bonnet in thinking, that to these vibrations in the nerves the co-operation of the ether is essentially necessary; and, therefore, at bottom the two hypothesis may be regarded as in substance the same. As to the trifling shade of difference between them, the advantage seems to me to be in favour of Bonnet.

un fluide dont la subtilité et l'élasticité approche de celle de la lumière ou de l'éther, on expliquera facilement par le secours de ce fluide, et la célérité avec laquelle les impressions se communiquent à l'ame, et celle avec laquelle l'âme exécute tant d'opérations différentes" (*Essai Anal.* Chap. v.)

"Au reste, les physiologistes qui avoient cru que les filets nerveux étoient solides, avoient cédé à des apparences trompeuses. Ils vouloient d'ailleurs faire osciller les nerfs pour rendre raison des sensations, et les nerfs ne peuvent osciller. Ils sont mous, et nullement élastiques. Un nerf coupé ne se retire point. C'est le fluide invisible que les nerfs renferment, qui est doué de cette élasticité qu'on leur attribuoit, et d'une plus grande élasticité encore." *Contemp. de la Nature*, VII Partie, Chap. i. Note at the end of the chapter.)

M. Quesnai, the celebrated author of the *Economical System*, has expressed himself to the same purpose concerning the supposed vibrations of the nerves: "Plusieurs physiciens ont pensé que le seul ébranlement des nerfs, causé par les objets qui touchent les organes des corps, suffit pour occasioner le mouvement et le sentiment dans les parties où les nerfs sont ébranlés. Ils se représentent les nerfs comme des cordes fort tendus, qu'un léger contact met en vibration dans toute leur étendue. Des philosophes, peu instruits en anatomie, ont pu se former une telle idée..... Mais cette tension qu'on suppose dans les nerfs, et qui les rend si susceptibles d'ébranlement et de vibration, est si grossièrement imaginée qu'il seroit ridicule de s'occuper sérieusement à la réfuter." (*Econ. Animale*, sect. c. 13.)

As this passage from Quesnai is quoted by Condillac, and sanctioned by his authority (*Traité des Animaux*, Chap. iii.), it would appear that the hypothesis which supposes the nerves to perform their functions by means of vibrations was going fast into discredit, both among the metaphysicians and the physiologists of France, at the very time when it was beginning to attract notice in England, in consequence of the visionary speculations of Hartley.

Nor was it only in their Physiological Theories concerning the nature of the union between soul and body, that these two philosophers agreed. On all the great articles of metaphysical theology, the coincidence between their conclusions is truly astonishing. Both held the doctrine of Necessity in its fullest extent; and both combined with it a vein of mystical devotion, setting at defiance the creeds of all established churches. The intentions of both are allowed, by those who best knew them, to have been eminently pure and worthy; but it cannot be said of either, that his metaphysical writings have contributed much to the instruction or to the improvement of the public. On the contrary, they have been instrumental in spreading a set of speculative tenets very nearly allied to that sentimental and fanatical modification of Spinozism, which, for many years past, has prevailed so much, and produced such mischievous effects in some parts of Germany.

But it is chiefly by his application of the associating principle to account for all the mental phenomena that Hartley is known to the world; and upon this I have nothing to add to what I have already stated in another work. (*Phil. Essays*, Essay IV.) His Theory seems to be already fast passing into oblivion; the temporary popularity which it enjoyed in this country having in a great measure, ceased with the life of its zealous and indefatigable apostle Dr. Priestley.¹

It would be unfair, however, to the translator of Archbishop King, to identify his opinions with those of Hartley and Priestley. The zeal with which he contends for man's free agency is sufficient, of itself, to draw a strong line of

¹ Dr. Priestley's opinion of the merits of Hartley's work is thus stated by himself: "Something was done in this field of knowledge by Descartes, very much by Mr. Locke, but most of all by Dr. Hartley, who has thrown more useful light upon the theory of the mind, than Newton did upon the theory of the natural world." (*Remarks on Reid, Beattie, and Oswald*, p. 2. London, 1774.)

distinction between his Ethical System and their's. (See his Notes on King, *passim*.) But I must be allowed to say of him, that the general scope of his writings tends, in common with that of the two other metaphysicians, to depreciate the evidences of Natural Religion, and more especially to depreciate the evidences which the light of nature affords of a life to come; "a doctrine equally necessary to comfort the weakness, and to support our lofty ideas of the grandeur of human nature;" and of which it seems hard to confine exclusively the knowledge to that portion of mankind who have been favoured with the light of Revelation. The influence of the same fundamental error, arising, too, from the same mistaken idea, of thus strengthening the cause of Christianity, may be traced in various passages of the posthumous work of the late Bishop of Llandaff. It is wonderful that the reasonings of Clarke and of Butler did not teach these eminent men a sounder and more consistent logic; or, at least, open their eyes to the inevitable consequences of the rash concessions which they made to their adversaries.²

¹ Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 6th Ed. Vol. I. pp. 325, 326.

Dr. Law's doctrine of the sleep of the soul, to which his high station in the church could not fail to add much weight in the judgment of many, is, I believe, now universally adopted by the followers of Hartley and Priestley; the theory of vibrations being evidently inconsistent with the supposition of the soul's being able to exercise her powers in a separate state from the body.

² Without entering at all into the argument with Dr. Law or his followers, it is sufficient here to mention, as an historical fact, their wide departure from the older lights of the English church. from Hooker downwards. "All religion (says Archbishop Tillotson, who I select as an unexceptionable organ of their common sentiments) is founded on right notions of God and his perfections, insomuch that Divine Revelation itself does suppose these for its foundations; and can signify nothing to us unless they be first known and believed; so that the principles of natural religion are the foundation of that which is reveal-

Among the disciples of Law, one illustrious exception to these remarks occurs in Dr. Paley, whose treatise on Natural Theology is unquestionably the most instructive as well as interesting publication on that subject which has appeared in our times. As the book was intended for popular use, the author has wisely avoided, as much as possible, all metaphysical discussions; but I do not know that there exists any other work where the argument from *final causes* is placed in so great a variety of pleasing and striking points of view.

SECTION VI.

CONDILLAC, AND OTHER FRENCH METAPHYSICIANS OF A LATER DATE.

WHILE Hartley and Bonnet were indulging their imagination in theorizing concerning the nature of the union

ed." (Sermon 41.) "There is an intrinsical good and evil in things, and the reasons and respects of moral good and evil are fixed and immutable, eternal and indispensable. Nor do they speak safely, who make the Divine will the rule of moral good and evil, as if there were nothing good or evil in its own nature antecedently to the will of God; but, that all things are therefore good and evil because God wills them to be so." (Sermon 88.) "Natural religion is obedience to the natural law, and the performance of such duties as natural light, without any express and supernatural revelation, doth dictate to men. These lie at the bottom of all religion and are the great fundamental duties which God requires of all mankind. These are the surest and most sacred of all other laws; those which God hath rivetted in our souls and written upon our hearts; and these are what we call moral duties, and most valued by God, which are of eternal and perpetual obligation because they do naturally oblige, without any particular and express revelation from God; and these are the foundation of revealed and instituted religion; and all revealed religion does suppose them and build upon them." Sermons 48, 49.

between soul and body, Condillac was attempting to draw the attention of his countrymen to the method of studying the phenomena of Mind recommended and exemplified by Locke.¹ Of the vanity of expecting to illustrate, by phy-

¹ It may appear to some unaccountable, that no notice should have been taken, in this Dissertation, of any French metaphysician during the long interval between Malebranche and Condillac. As an apology for this apparent omission, I beg leave to quote the words of an author intimately acquainted with the history of French literature and philosophy, and eminently qualified to appreciate the merits of those who have contributed to their progress. "If we except (says Mr. Adam Smith, in a *Memoir* published in 1755) the Meditations of Descartes, I know of nothing in the works of French writers which aspires at originality in morals or metaphysics; for the philosophy of Regius and that of Malebranche are nothing more than the meditations of Descartes unfolded with more art and refinement. But Hobbes, Locke, Dr. Mandeville, Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Butler, Dr. Clarke, and Mr. Hutcheson, each in his own system, all different and all incompatible, have tried to be original, at least in some points. They have attempted to add something to the fund of observations collected by their predecessors, and already the common property of mankind. This branch of science, which the English themselves neglect at present, appears to have been recently transported into France. I discover some traces of it not only in the *Encyclopédie*, but in the *Theory of Agreeable Sensations*, by M. de Pouilly; and much more in the late discourse of M. Rousseau, *On the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Ranks among Men*."

Although I perfectly agree with Mr. Smith in his general remark on the sterility of invention among the French metaphysicians posterior to Descartes, when compared to those of England, I cannot pass over the foregoing quotation without expressing my surprise, 1st, To find the name of Malebranche (one of the highest in modern philosophy) degraded to a level with that of Regius; and, 2dly, To observe Mr. Smith's silence with respect to Buffier and Condillac, while he mentions the author of the *Theory of Agreeable Sensations* as a metaphysician of original genius. Of the merits of Condillac, whose most important works were published several years before this paper of Mr. Smith's, I am about to speak in the text; and those of Buffier I shall have occasion to mention in a subsequent part of this discourse. In the mean time, I shall only say of him, that I regard him as one of the most original as well as sound philosophers of whom the eighteenth century has to boast.

siological conjectures, the manner in which the intercourse between the thinking principle and the external world is carried on, no philosopher seems ever to have been more completely aware ; and, accordingly, he confines himself strictly, in all his researches concerning this intercourse, to an examination of the general laws by which it is regulated. There is, at the same time, a remarkable coincidence between some of his views and those of the other two writers. All of the three, while they profess the highest veneration for Locke, have abandoned his account of the origin of our ideas for that of Gassendi ; and, by doing so, have, with the best intentions, furnished arms against those principles which it was their common aim to establish in the world.¹ It is much to be regretted, that by far the greater part of those French writers who have since speculated about the human mind, have acquired the whole of their knowledge of Locke's philosophy through this mistaken comment upon its fundamental principle. On this subject I have already exhausted all that I have to offer on the effect of Condillac's writings ; and I flatter myself have sufficiently shown how widely his commentary differs from the text of his author. It is this commentary, however, which is now almost universally received on the Continent as the doctrine of Locke, and which may justly be regarded as the sheet-anchor of those systems which are commonly stigmatised in England with the appellation of French philosophy. Had Condillac been sufficiently aware of the consequences which have been deduced (and I must add

¹ Condillac's earliest work appeared three years before the publication of Hartley's *Theory*. It is entitled, "*Essai sur l'Origine des Connoissances Humaines. Ouvrage ou l'on réduit à un seul principe tout ce qui concerne l'entendement humain.*" This *seul principe* is the Association of ideas. The account which both authors give of the transformation of sensations into ideas is substantially the same.

logically deduced) from his account of the origin of our knowledge, I am persuaded, from his known candour and love of truth, that he would have been eager to acknowledge and to retract his error.

In this apparent simplification and generalization of Locke's doctrine, there is, it must be acknowledged, something, at first sight, extremely seducing. It relieves the mind from the painful exercise of abstracted reflection, and amuses it with analogy and metaphor when it looked only for the severity of logical discussion. The clearness and simplicity of Condillac's style add to the force of this illusion, and flatter the reader with an agreeable idea of the powers of his own understanding, when he finds himself so easily conducted through the darkest labyrinths of metaphysical science. It is to this cause I would chiefly ascribe the great popularity of his works. They may be read with as little exertion of thought as a history or a novel; and it is only when we shut the book, and attempt to express in our own words, the substance of what we have gained, that we have the mortification to see our supposed acquisitions vanish into air.

The philosophy of Condillac was, in a more peculiar manner, suited to the taste of his own country, where (according to Mad. de Stael) "few read a book but with a view to talk of it."¹ Among such a people, speculations which are addressed to the power of reflection can never expect to acquire the same popularity with theories expressed in a metaphorical language, and constantly recalling to the fancy the impressions of the external senses. The state of society in France, accordingly, is singularly unfavourable to the inductive philosophy of the human mind; and of

¹ "En France, on ne lit guère un ouvrage que pour en parler." (*Allemagne*, Tom. I. p. 292.) The same remark, I am much afraid, is becoming daily more and more applicable to our own island.

this truth no proof more decisive can be produced, than the admiration with which the metaphysical writings of Condillac have been so long regarded.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Condillac has, in many instances, been eminently successful, both in observing and describing the mental phenomena; but, in such cases, he commonly follows Locke as his guide; and, wherever he trusts to his own judgment, he seldom fails to wander from his way. The best part of his works relates to the action and reaction of thought and language on each other, a subject which had been previously very profoundly treated by Locke, but which Condillac has had the merit of placing in many new and happy points of view. In various cases, his conclusions are pushed too far; and in others are expressed without due precision; but, on the whole, they form a most valuable accession to this important branch of logic; and (what not a little enhances their value) they have been instrumental in recommending the subject to the attention of other inquirers, still better qualified than their author to do it justice.

In the speculation, too, concerning the origin and the theoretical history of language, Condillac was one of the first who made any considerable advances; nor does it reflect any discredit on his ingenuity, that he has left some of the principal difficulties connected with the inquiry very imperfectly explained. The same subject was soon after taken up by Mr. Smith, who, I think, it must be owned, has rather slurred over these difficulties, than attempted to remove them; an omission on his part the more remarkable, as a very specious and puzzling objection had been recently stated by Rousseau, not only to the theory of Condillac, but to all speculations which have for their object the solution of the same problem. "If language" (says Rousseau) "be the result of human convention, and if words be essential to the exercise of thought, language

would appear to be necessary for the invention of language.”—“But” (continues the same author) “when, by means *which I cannot conceive*, our new grammarians began to extend their ideas, and to generalize their words, their ignorance must have confined them within very narrow bounds. How, for example, could they imagine or comprehend such words as matter, mind, substance, mode, figure, motion, since our philosophers, who have so long made use of them, scarcely understand them, and since the ideas attached to them, being purely metaphysical, can have no model in nature?”

“I stop at these first steps” (continues Rousseau), “and entreat my judges to pause, and consider the distance between the easiest part of language, the invention of physical substantives, and the power of expressing all the thoughts of man, so as to speak in public, and influence society. I entreat them to reflect upon the time and knowledge it must have required to discover numbers, abstract words, aorists, and all the tenses of verbs, particles, syntax, the art of connecting propositions and arguments, and how to form the whole logic of discourse. As for myself, alarmed at these multiplying difficulties, and convinced of the almost demonstrable impossibility of language having been formed and established by means merely human, I leave to others the discussion of the problem, “Whether a society already formed was more necessary for the institution of

¹ That men never could have invented an artificial language, if they had not possessed a natural language, is an observation of Dr. Reid’s; and it is this indisputable and self-evident truth which gives to Rousseau’s remark that imposing plausibility, which, at first sight, dazzles and perplexes the judgment. I by no means say, that the former proposition affords a key to *all* the difficulties suggested by the latter; but it advances us at least one important step towards their solution.

language, or a language already invented for the establishment of society?"¹

Of the various difficulties here enumerated, *that* mentioned by Rousseau, in the last sentence, was plainly considered by him as the greatest of all; or rather as comprehending under it all the rest. But this difficulty arises merely from his own peculiar and paradoxical theory about the artificial origin of society; a theory which needs no refutation, but the short and luminous aphorism of Montesquieu, that "man is born in society, and there he remains." The other difficulties touched upon by Rousseau, in the former part of this quotation, are much more serious, and have never yet been removed in a manner completely satisfactory: And hence some very ingenious writers have been led to conclude, that language could not possibly have been the work of human invention. This argument has been lately urged with much acuteness and plausibility by Dr. Magee of Dublin, and by M. de Bonald of Paris.² It may, however, be reasonably questioned, if these philosophers would not have reasoned more logically, had they contented themselves with merely affirming, that the problem has not yet been solved, without going so far as to pronounce it to be absolutely insolvable. For my own part, when I consider its extreme difficulty, and the short space of time during which it has engaged the attention of the learned, I am more disposed to wonder at the steps which have been already gained in the research, than at the number of *desiderata* which remain to employ the ingenuity of

¹ *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes.*

² The same theory has been extended to the art of writing; but if *this* art was first taught to man by an express revelation from Heaven, what account can be given of its present state in the great empire of China? Is the mode of writing practised there of divine or of human origin?

our successors. It is justly remarked by Dr. Ferguson, that, "when language has attained to that perfection to which it arrives in the progress of society, the speculative mind, in comparing the first and the last stages of the progress, feels the same sort of amazement with a traveller, who, after rising insensibly on the slope of a hill, comes to look down from a precipice, to the summit of which he scarcely believes he could have ascended without supernatural aid."¹

¹ *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, Vol. I. p. 43. Edin. 1792. To this observation may be added by way of comment, the following reflections of one of the most learned prelates of the English church: "Man, we are told, had a language from the beginning; for he conversed with God, and gave to every animal its particular name. But how came man by language? He must either have had it from *inspiration*, ready formed from his Creator, or have *derived* it by the exertion of those faculties of the mind, which were implanted in him as a rational creature, from natural and external objects with which he was surrounded. Scripture is silent on the means by which it was acquired. We are not, therefore, warranted to affirm, that it was received by *inspiration*, and there is no internal evidence in language to lead us to such a supposition. On this side, then, of the question, we have nothing but uncertainty; but on a subject, the causes of which are so remote, nothing is more convenient than to refer them to *inspiration*, and to recur to that easy and comprehensive argument,

Διὸς δὲ τέλειτο βούλη·

that is, man enjoyed the great privilege of speech, which distinguished him at first, and still continues to distinguish him as a *rational* creature, so eminently from the brute creation, without exerting those *reasoning* faculties, by which he was in *other* respects enabled to raise himself so much above their level. Inspiration, then, seems to have been an argument adopted and made necessary by the difficulty of accounting for it otherwise; and the name of inspiration carries with it an awfulness, which forbids the unhallowed approach of inquisitive discussion." (*Essay on the Study of Antiquities*, by Dr. Burgess, 2d edit. Oxford, 1782. Pp. 85, 86.)

It is farther remarked very sagaciously, and I think very decisively, by the same author, that "the supposition of man hav-

With respect to some of the difficulties pointed out by Rousseau and his commentators, it may be here remarked in passing (and the observation is equally applicable to various passages in Mr. Smith's dissertation on the same subject), that the difficulty of explaining the theory of any of our intellectual operations affords no proof of any difficulty in applying that operation to its proper practical purpose; nor is the difficulty of explaining the metaphysical nature of any part of speech a proof, that, in its first origin, it implied any extraordinary effort of intellectual capacity. How many metaphysical difficulties might be raised about the mathematical notion of a *line*? And yet this notion is perfectly comprehended by every peasant, when he speaks of the distance between two places; or of the length, breadth, or height of his cottage. In like manner, although it may be difficult to give a satisfactory account of the origin and import of such words, as *of* or *by*, we ought not to conclude, that the invention of them implied any metaphysical knowledge in the individual who first employed them.¹ Their import, we see, is fully understood by children of three or four years of age.

ing received a language ready formed from his Creator, is *actually* inconsistent with the evidence of the origin of our ideas, which exists in language. For, as the origin of our ideas is to be traced in the words through which the ideas are conveyed, so the origin of language is referable to the source from whence our (*first*) ideas are derived, namely, *natural* and *external* objects." (*Ibid.* pp. 83, 84.)

¹ In this remark I had an eye to the following passage in Mr. Smith's dissertation: "It is worth while to observe, that those prepositions, which, in modern languages, hold the place of the ancient cases, are, of all others, the most general and abstract, and metaphysical; and, of consequence, would probably be the last invented. Ask any man of common acuteness, what relation is expressed by the preposition *above*? He will readily answer, that of *superiority*. By the preposition *below*? He will as quickly reply, that of *inferiority*. But ask him what relation is expressed by the preposition *of*? and, if he has not beforehand employed his thoughts a good deal upon these subjects, you may safely allow him a week to consider of his answer."

In this view of the History of Language I have been anticipated by Dr. Ferguson. "Parts of speech" (says this profound and original writer), "which, in speculation, cost the grammarian so much study, are, in practice, familiar to the vulgar. The rudest tribes, even the idiot and the insane, are possessed of them. They are soonest learned in childhood, insomuch that we must suppose human nature, in its lowest state, competent to the use of them; and, without the intervention of uncommon genius, mankind, in a succession of ages, qualified to accomplish in detail this amazing fabric of language, which, when raised to its height, appears so much above what could be ascribed to any simultaneous effort of the most sublime and comprehensive abilities."¹

¹ The following judicious reflections, with which M. Raynouard concludes the introduction to his *Elémens de la Langue Romane*, may serve to illustrate some of the above observations. The modification of an existing language is, I acknowledge, a thing much less wonderful than the formation of a language entirely new; but the processes of thought, it is reasonable to think, are, in both cases, of the same kind; and the consideration of the one is at least a step gained towards the elucidation of the other.

"La langue Romane est peut-être la seule à la formation de laquelle il soit permis de remonter ainsi, pour découvrir et expliquer le secret de son industrieux mécanisme. . . . J'ose dire que l'esprit philosophique, consulté sur le choix des moyens qui devraient épargner à l'ignorance beaucoup d'études pénibles et fastidieuses, n'eut pas été aussi heureux que l'ignorance elle-même; il est vrai qu'elle avoit deux grands maîtres; la NECES-
SITE et le TEMS.

"En considerant à quelle époque d'ignorance et de barbarie s'est formé et perfectionné ce nouvel idiôme, d'après des principes indiqués seulement par l'analogie et l'euphonie, on se dira peut-être comme je me le suis dit; l'homme porte en soi-même les principes d'une logique naturelle, d'un instinct régulateur, que nous admirons quelquefois dans les enfans. Oui, la providence nous a doté de la faculté indestructible et des moyens ingénieux d'exprimer, de communiquer, d'éterniser par la parole, et par les signes permanens ou elle se reproduit, cet-

It is, however, less in tracing the first rudiments of speech, than in some collateral inquiries concerning the genius of different languages, that Condillac's ingenuity appears to advantage. Some of his observations, in particular, on the connection of natural signs with the growth of a systematical prosody, and on the imitative arts of the Greeks and Romans, as distinguished from those of the moderns, are new and curious; and are enlivened with a mix-

te pensée qui est l'un de nos plus beaux attributs, et qui nous distingue si éminemment et si avantageusement dans l'ordre de la création." (*Elémens de la Grammaire de la Langue Romane avant l'An. 1000.* Pp. 104, 105, à Paris, 1816.)

In the theoretical history of language, it is more than probable, that some steps will remain to exercise the ingenuity of our latest posterity. Nor will this appear surprising, when we consider how impossible it is for us to judge, from our own experience, of the intellectual processes which pass in the minds of savages. Some instincts, we know, possessed both by them and by infants (that of imitation, for example, and the use of natural signs), disappear in by far the greater number of individuals, almost entirely in the maturity of their reason. It does not seem at all improbable, that other instincts connected with the invention of speech, may be confined to that state of the intellectual powers which requires their guidance; nor is it quite impossible, that some latent capacities of the understanding may be evolved by the pressure of necessity. The facility with which infants surmount so many grammatical and metaphysical difficulties, seems to me to add much weight to these conjectures.

In tracing the first steps of the invention of language, it ought never to be forgotten, that we undertake a task more similar than might at first be supposed, to that of tracing the first operations of the infant mind. In both cases, we are apt to attempt an explanation from reason alone, of what requires the co-operation of very different principles. To trace the theoretical history of geometry, in which we know for certain, that all the transitions have depended on *reasoning* alone, is a problem which has not yet been completely solved. Nor has even any satisfactory account been hitherto given of the experimental steps by which men were gradually led to the use of iron. And yet how simple are these problems, when compared with that relating to the origin and progress of language!

ture of historical illustration, and of critical discussion, seldom to be met with among metaphysical writers.

But through all his researches, the radical error may, more or less, be traced, which lies at the bottom of his system;¹ and hence it is, that, with all his skill as a writer, he never elevates the imagination, or touches the heart. That he wrote with the best intentions, we have satisfacto-

¹ A remarkable instance of this occurs in that part of Condillac's *Cours d'Etude*, where he treats of the art of writing: "Vous savez, Monseigneur, comment les mêmes noms ont été transportés des objets qui tombent sous les sens à ceux qui les échappent. Vous avez remarqué, qu'il y en a qui sont encore en usage dans l'un et l'autre acceptation, et qu'il y en a qui sont devenus les noms propres des choses, dont ils avoient d'abord été les signes figurés.

"Les premiers, tel que le *mouvement* de l'ame, son *penchant*, sa *réflexion*, donnent un corps à des choses qui n'en ont pas. Les seconds, tels que la *pensée*, la *volonté*, le *desir*, ne peignent plus rien, et laissent aux idées abstraites cette spiritualité qui les dérobe aux sens. Mais si le langage doit être l'image de nos pensées, on a perdu beaucoup, lorsqu'oubliant la première signification des mots, on a effacé jusqu'au traits qu'ils donnoient aux idées. Toutes les langues sont en cela plus ou moins defectueuses, toutes aussi ont des tableaux plus ou moins conservés." (*Cours de Etude*, Tome II. p. 212. à Parme, 1775.)

Condillac enlarges on this point at considerable length; endeavouring to show, that whenever we lose sight of the analogical origin of a figurative word, we become insensible to one of the chief beauties of language. "In the word *examen*, for example, a Frenchman perceives only the proper name of one of our mental operations. A Roman attached to it the same idea, and received over and above the image of weighing and balancing. The case is the same with the words *ame* and *anima*; *pensée* and *cogitatio*."

In this view of the subject, Condillac plainly proceeded on his favourite principle, that all our notions of our mental operations are compounded of sensible images. Whereas the fact is, that the only just notions we can form of the powers of the mind are obtained by abstracting from the qualities and laws of the material world. In proportion, therefore, as the analogical origin of a figurative word disappears, it becomes a fitter instrument of metaphysical thought and reasoning. (See *Philosophical Essays*, Part I. Essay V. chap. iii.)

ry evidence ; and yet hardly a philosopher can be named, whose theories have had more influence in misleading the opinions of his contemporaries.¹ In France, he very early attained to a rank and authority not inferior to those which have been so long and so deservedly assigned to Locke in England ; and even in this country, his works have been more generally read and admired, than those of any foreign metaphysician of an equally recent date.

¹ A late writer (M. de Bonald), whose philosophical opinions, in general, agree nearly with those of La Harpe, has, however, appretiated very differently, and, in my judgment, much more sagaciously, the merits of Condillac : “ Condillac a eu sur l’esprit philosophique du dernier siècle, l’influence que Voltaire à prise sur l’esprit religieux, et J. J. Rousseau sur les opinions politiques. Condillac à mis de la séchéresse et de la minutie dans les esprits ; Voltaire du penchant à la raillerie et à la frivolité ; Rousseau les à rendus chagrins et mécontents..... Condillac a encore plus faussé l’esprit de la nation, parce que sa doctrine étoit enseignée dans les premières études à des jeunes jens qui n’avoient encore lu ni Rousseau, ni Voltaire, et que la manière de raisonner et la direction philosophique de l’esprit s’étendent à tout.” (*Recherches Phil.* Tome I. pp. 187, 182.)

The following criticism on the supposed perspicuity of Condillac’s style is so just and philosophical, that I cannot refrain from giving it a place here : “ Condillac est, ou paroît être, clair et méthodique ; mais il faut prendre garde que la clarté des pensées, comme la transparence des objets physiques, peut tenir d’un défaut de profondeur, et que la méthode dans les écrits, qui suppose la patience de l’esprit, n’en prouve pas toujours la justesse ; et moins encore la fécondité. Il y a aussi une clarté de style en quelque sorte toute matérielle, qui n’est pas incompatible avec l’obscurité dans les idées. Rien de plus facile à entendre que les mots de *sensations transformées* dont Condillac s’est servi, parce que ces mots ne parlent qu’à l’imagination, qui se figure à volonté des transformations et des changemens.* Mais cette transformation, appliquée aux opérations de l’esprit, n’est qu’un mot vide de sens ; et Condillac lui-même, auroit été bien embarrassé d’en donner une explication satisfaisante. Ce philosophe me paroît plus heureux dans ses apperçus que dans ses démonstrations : La route de la vérité semble quelquefois s’ouvrir devant lui, mais retenu par la circonspection naturelle à un esprit sans chaleur, et intimidé par la faiblesse de son propre système, il n’ose s’y engager.” (*Ibid.* Tome I. pp. 33, 34.)

The very general sketches to which I am here obliged to confine myself, do not allow me to take notice of various contributions to metaphysical science, which are to be collected from writers professedly intent upon other subjects. I must not, however, pass over in silence the name of Buffon, who, in the midst of those magnificent views of external nature, which the peculiar character of his eloquence fitted him so admirably to delineate, has frequently indulged himself in ingenious discussions concerning the faculties both of men and of brutes. His subject, indeed, led his attention chiefly to man, considered as an animal; but the peculiarities which the human race exhibit in their physical condition, and the manifest reference which these bear to their superior rank in the creation, unavoidably engaged him in speculations of a higher aim, and of a deeper interest. In prosecuting these, he has been accused (and perhaps with some justice) of ascribing too much to the effects of bodily organization on the intellectual powers; but he leads his reader in so pleasing a manner from matter to mind, that I have no doubt he has attracted the curiosity of many to metaphysical inquiries, who would never otherwise have thought of them. In his theories concerning the nature of the brutes, he has been commonly considered as leaning to the opinion of Descartes; but I cannot help thinking, without any good reason. Some of his ideas on the complicated operations of insects appear to me just and satisfactory; and while they account for the phenomena, without ascribing to the animal any deep or comprehensive knowledge, are far from degrading him to an insentient and unconscious machine.

In his account of the process by which the use of our external senses (particularly that of sight) is acquired, Buffon has in general followed the principles of Berkeley; and, notwithstanding some important mistakes which have escaped him in his applications of these principles, I do not

know that there is anywhere to be found so pleasing or so popular an exposition of the theory of vision. Nothing certainly was ever more finely imagined, than the recital which he puts into the mouth of our first parent, of the gradual steps by which he learned the use of his perceptive organs ; and although there are various parts of it which will not bear the test of a rigorous examination, it is impossible to read it without sharing in that admiration, with which we are told the author himself always regarded this favourite effusion of his eloquence.

Nor are these the only instances in which Buffon has discovered the powers of a metaphysician. His thoughts on probabilities, (a subject widely removed from his favourite studies,) afford a proof how strongly some metaphysical questions had laid hold of his curiosity, and what new lights he was qualified to throw on them, if he had allowed them to occupy more of his attention.¹ In his observations too, on the peculiar nature of mathematical evidence, he has struck into a train of the soundest thinking, in which he has been very generally followed by our later logicians.² Some particular expressions in the passage I refer to are exceptionable ; but his remarks on what he calls *vérités de Definition* are just and important ; nor do I remember any modern writer, of an earlier date, who has touched on the same argument. Plato, indeed, and after him Proclus, had called the definitions of geometry *Hypotheses* ; an expression which may be considered as involving the doctrine which Buffon and his successors have more fully unfolded.

What the opinions of Buffon were on those essential questions, which were then in dispute among the French

¹ See his *Essai d'Arithmétique Morale*.

² See the First Discourse prefixed to his *Natural History*, towards the end.

philosophers, his writings do not furnish the means of judging with certainty. In his theory of *Organic Molecules*, and of *Internal Moulds*, he has been accused of entertaining views not very different from those of the ancient atomists ; nor would it perhaps be easy to repel the charge, if we were not able to oppose to this wild and unintelligible hypothesis the noble and elevating strain, which in general so peculiarly characterizes his descriptions of nature. The eloquence of some of the finest passages in his works has manifestly been inspired by the same sentiment which dictated to one of his favourite authors the following just and pathetic reflection : “Le spectacle de la nature, si vivant, si animé pour ceux qui reconnoissent un Dieu, est mort aux yeux de l’athée, et dans cette grande harmonie des êtres on tout parle de Dieu d’une voix si douce, il n’apperçoit qu’un silence éternel.”¹

I have already mentioned the strong bias towards materialism, which the authors of the *Encyclopédie* derived from Condillac’s comments upon Locke. These comments they seem to have received entirely upon credit, without ever being at pains to compare them with the original. Had D’Alembert exercised freely his own judgment, no person

¹ Rousseau.—In a work by Hérault de Sechelles (entitled *Voyage à Montbar, contenant des détails très intéressans sur le caractère, la personne, et les écrits de Buffon*, Paris, 1801), a very different idea of his religious creed is given from that which I have ascribed to him ; but, in direct opposition to this statement, we have a letter, dictated by Buffon, on his death-bed, to Madame Necker, in return for a present of her husband’s book, *On the Importance of Religious Opinions*. The letter (we are told) is in the hand-writing of Buffon’s son, who describes his father as then too weak to hold the pen. (*Mélanges extraits des Manuscrits de Madame Necker*. 3 Vols. Paris, 1788.)

The sublime address to the Supreme Being, with which Buffon closes his reflections on the calamities of war, seems to breathe the very soul of Fenelon. “Grand Dieu ! dont la seule présence soutient la nature et maintient l’harmonie des loix de l’univers,” &c. &c. &c.

was more likely to have perceived their complete futility ; and, in fact, he has thrown out various observations which strike at their very root. Notwithstanding, however, these occasional glimpses of light, he invariably reverts to the same error, and has once and again repeated it in terms as strong as Condillac or Gassendi.

The author who pushed this account of the origin of our knowledge to the most extraordinary and offensive consequences, was Helvetius. His book, *De l'Esprit*, is said to have been composed of materials collected from the conversations of the society in which he habitually lived ; and it has accordingly been quoted as an authentic record of the ideas then in fashion among the wits of Paris. The unconnected and desultory composition of the work certainly furnishes some intrinsic evidence of the truth of this anecdote.

According to Helvetius, as all our ideas are derived from the external senses,¹ the causes of the inferiority of the

¹ In combating the philosophy of Helvetius, La Harpe (whose philosophical opinions seem, on many occasions, to have been not a little influenced by his private partialities and dislikes) exclaims loudly against the same principles to which he had tacitly given his unqualified approbation in speaking of Condillac. On this occasion he is at pains to distinguish between the doctrines of the two writers ; asserting that Condillac considered our senses as only the *occasional* causes of our ideas, while Helvetius represented the former as the *productive* causes of the latter. (*Cours de Littérat.* Tome XV. pp. 348, 349) But that this is by no means reconcileable with the general spirit of Condillac's works (although perhaps some detached expressions may be selected from them admitting of such an interpretation), appears sufficiently from the passages formerly quoted. In addition to these, I beg leave to transcribe the following : “ Dans le système que toutes nos connoissances viennent des sens, rien n'est plus aisé que de se faire une notion exacte des idées. Car elles ne sont que des sensations ou des portions extraites de quelque sensation pour être considérées à part ; ce qui produit deux sortes d'idées, les sensibles et les abstraites.” (*Traité des Systèmes*, Chap. vi.) “ Puisque nous avons vu que le souvenir n'est qu'une manière de sentir, c'est une conséquence, que les idées intellectuelles ne diffèrent pas essentiellement des sensations mêmes.”

souls of brutes to those of men, are to be sought for in the difference between them with respect to bodily organization. In illustration of this remark, he reasons as follows :

“ 1. The feet of all quadrupeds terminate either in horn, as those of the ox and the deer ; or in nails, as those of the dog and the wolf ; or in claws, as those of the lion and the cat. This peculiar organization of the feet of these animals deprives them not only of the sense of touch, considered as a channel of information with respect to external objects, but also of the dexterity requisite for the practice of the mechanical arts.

“ 2. The life of animals, in general, being of a shorter duration than that of man, does not permit them to make so many observations, or to acquire so many ideas.

“ 3. Animals being better armed and better clothed by nature than the human species, have fewer wants, and consequently fewer motives to stimulate or to exercise their invention. If the voracious animals are more cunning than others, it is because hunger, ever inventive, inspires them with the art of stratagems to surprise their prey.

“ 4. The lower animals compose a society that flies from man, who, by the assistance of weapons made by himself, is become formidable to the strongest amongst them.

(*Traité des Sensations*, Chap. viii. § 33.) Is not this precisely the doctrine and even the language of Helvetius ?

In the same passage of the *Lycée*, from which the above quotation is taken from La Harpe, there is a sweeping judgment pronounced on the merits of Locke, which may serve as a specimen of the author's competency to decide on metaphysical questions : “ Locke a prouvé autant qu'il est possible à l'homme, que l'ame est une substance simple et indivisible, et par conséquent immatérielle. Cependant, il ajoute, qu'il n'oseroit affirmer que Dieu ne puisse douer la matière de pensée. Condillac est de son avis sur le premier article, et le combat sur le second. Je suis entièrement de l'avis de Condillac, et tous les bons métaphysiciens conviennent que c'est la seule inexactitude qu'on puisse relever dans l'ouvrage de Locke.” (*Cours de Littérat.* Tom. XV. p. 149.)

“5. Man is the most prolific and versatile animal upon earth. He is born and lives in every climate; while many of the other animals, as the lion, the elephant, and the rhinoceros, are found only in a certain latitude. And the more any species of animals capable of making observations is multiplied, the more ideas and the greater ingenuity is it likely to possess.

“But some may ask (continues Helvetius), why monkeys, whose paws are nearly as dexterous as our hands, do not make a progress equal to that of man? A variety of causes (he observes) conspire to fix them in that state of inferiority in which we find them: 1. Men are more multiplied upon the earth. 2. Among the different species of monkeys, there are few whose strength can be compared with that of man; and, accordingly, they form only a fugitive society before the human race. 3. Monkeys being frugivorous, have fewer wants, and, therefore, less invention than man. 4. Their life is shorter. And, finally, the organical structure of their bodies keeping them, like children, in perpetual motion, even after their desires are satisfied, they are not susceptible of lassitude (*ennui*), which ought to be considered (as I shall prove afterwards) as one of the principles to which the human mind owes its improvement.

“By combining (he adds) all these differences between the nature of man and of beast, we may understand why sensibility and memory, though faculties common to man and to the lower animals, are in the latter only sterile qualities.”¹

¹ It is not a little surprising that, in the above enumeration, Helvetius takes no notice of the want of *language* in the lower animals; a faculty without which, the multiplication of individuals could contribute nothing to the improvement of the species. Nor is this want of language in the brutes owing to any defect in the organs of speech; as sufficiently appears from those

The foregoing passage is translated literally from a note on one of the first paragraphs of the book *De l'Esprit*; and in the sentence of the text to which the note refers, the author triumphantly asks, "Who can doubt, that if the wrist of a man had been terminated by the hoof of a horse, the species would still have been wandering in the forest?"

Without attempting any examination of this shallow and miserable theory, I shall content myself with observing, that it is not peculiar to the philosophers of modern France. From the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon it appears, that it was current among the sophists of Greece; and the answer given it by Socrates is as philosophical and satisfactory as any thing that could possibly be advanced in the present state of the sciences.

"And canst thou doubt, Aristodemus, if the gods take care of man? Hath not the privilege of an erect form been bestowed on him alone? Other animals they have provided with feet, by which they may be removed from one place to another; but to man they have also given the use of the hand. A tongue hath been bestowed on every other animal; but what animal, except man, hath the power of making his thoughts intelligible to others?"

"Nor is it with respect to the body alone that the gods have shown themselves bountiful to man. Who seeth not, that he is as it were a god in the midst of this visible creation? So far doth he surpass all animals whatever in the endowments of his body and his mind. For if the body of the ox had been joined to the mind of man, the invention of the latter would have been of little avail, while unable to execute his purposes with facility. Nor would the human

tribes which are possessed of the power of articulation in no inconsiderable a degree. It plainly indicates, therefore, some defect in those higher principles which are connected with the use of artificial signs.

form have been of more use to the brute, so long as he remained destitute of understanding. But in thee, Aristodemus, hath been joined to a wonderful soul, a body no less wonderful; and sayest thou, after this, the gods take no care of me? What wouldst thou then more, to convince thee of their care?"¹

A very remarkable passage to the same purpose occurs in Galen's treatise, *De Usu Partium*. "But as of all animals man is the wisest, so *hands* are well fitted for the purposes of a wise animal. For it is not because he had hands, that he is therefore wiser than the rest, as Anaxagoras alleged; but because he was wiser than the rest that he had therefore hands, as Aristotle has most wisely judged. Neither was it his hands but his reason which instructed man in the arts. The hands are only the organs by which the arts are practised."²

The contrast, in point of elevation, between the tone of French philosophy, and that of the best heathen moralists, was long ago remarked by Addison; and of this contrast, it would be difficult to find a better illustration than the passages which have just been quoted.

The disposition of ingenious men to pass suddenly from one extreme to another in matters of controversy, has, in no instance, been more strikingly exemplified than in the opposite theories concerning the nature of the brutes, which successively became fashionable in France during the last century. While the prevailing creed of French materialists leads to the rejection of every theory which professes to discriminate the rational mind from the animal principle of action, it is well known that, but a few years before, the disciples of Descartes allowed no one faculty to belong to man and brutes in common; and even went so far as

¹ Mrs. Sarah Fielding's translation.

² Galen, *De Us. Part.* l. 1. c. 3.

to consider the latter in the light of mere machines. To this paradox the author was probably led, partly by his anxiety to elude the objection which the faculties of the lower animals have been supposed to present to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and partly by the difficulty of reconciling their sufferings with the Divine Goodness.

Absurd as this idea may now appear, none of the tenets of Descartes were once adopted with more implicit faith by some of the profoundest thinkers in Europe. The great Pascal admired it as the finest and most valuable article of the Cartesian system; and of the deep impression it made on the mind of Malebranche, a most decisive proof was exhibited by himself in the presence of Fontenelle. "M. de Fontenelle contoit (says one of his intimate friends¹) qu'un jour étant allé voir Malebranche aux P. P. de l'Oratoire de la Rue St. Honoré, une grosse chienne de la maison, et qui étoit pleine, entra dans la salle où ils se promenoient, vint caresser le P. Malebranche, et se rouler à ses pieds. Après quelques mouvemens inutiles pour la chasser, le philosophe lui donna un grand coup de pied, qui fit jetter à la chienne un cri de douleur, et à M. de Fontenelle un cri de compassion. Eh quoi (lui dit froidement le P. Malebranche) ne sçavez vous pas bien que cela ne se sent point?"

On this point Fontenelle, though a zealous Cartesian, had the good sense to dissent openly from his master, and even to express his approbation of the sarcastic remark of La Motte, *que cette opinion sur les animaux étoit une débauche de raisonnement*. Is not the same expression equally applicable to the opposite theory quoted from Helvetius?²

¹ The Abbé Trublet in the *Mercure de Juillet*, 1757. See *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, Tome II. p. 137. Amsterdam, 1764.

² In La Fontaine's *Discours à Madame de la Sablière* (Liv. X. Fable I.), the good sense with which he points out the extrava-

From those representations of human nature which tend to assimilate to each other the faculties of man and of the brutes, the transition to atheism is not very wide. In the present instance, both conclusions seem to be the necessary corollaries of the same fundamental maxim. For if all the sources of our knowledge are to be found in the external senses, how is it possible for the human mind to rise to a conception of the Supreme Being, or to that of any other truth either of natural or of revealed religion?

To this question Gassendi and Condillac, it cannot be doubted, were both able to return an answer, which seemed to themselves abundantly satisfactory. But how few of the multitude are competent to enter into these refined explanations? And how much is it to be dreaded, that the majority will embrace, with the general principle, all the more obvious consequences which to their own gross conceptions it seems necessarily to involve? Something of the same sort may be remarked in the controversy about the freedom of the human will. Among the multitudes whom Leibnitz and Edwards have made converts to the scheme of necessity, how comparatively inconsiderable is the number who have acquiesced in their subtle and ingenious attempts to reconcile this scheme with man's accountableness and moral agency?

Of the prevalence of atheism at Paris, among the higher classes, at the period of which we are now speaking, the *Memoirs* and *Correspondence* of the Baron de Grimm afford the most unquestionable proofs.¹ His friend Diderot seems

gance of both these extremes is truly admirable. His argument (in spite of the fetters of rhyme) is stated, not only with his usual grace, but with singular clearness and precision; and, considering the period when he wrote, reflects much honour on his philosophical sagacity.

¹ The *Système de la Nature* (the boldest, if not the ablest, publication of the Parisian atheists) appeared in 1770. It bore

to have been one of its most zealous abettors ; who, it appears from various accounts, contributed to render it fashionable, still more by the extraordinary powers of his conversation, than by the odd combination of eloquence and of obscurity displayed in all his metaphysical productions.²

on the title-page the name of Mirabaud, a respectable but not very eminent writer, who, after long filling the office of perpetual secretary to the French Academy, died at a very advanced age in 1760. (He was chiefly known as the author of very indifferent translations of *Tasso* and *Ariosto*.) It is now, however, universally admitted that Mirabaud had no share whatever in the composition of the *Système de la Nature*. It has been ascribed to various authors ; nor am I quite certain, that, among those who are most competent to form a judgment upon this point, there is yet a perfect unanimity. In one of the latest works which has reached this country from France (the *Correspondance inédite de Galiani*. 1818), it seems to be assumed by the editors, as an acknowledged fact, that it proceeded from the pen of the Baron d'Holbach. The Abbé Galiani having remarked, in one of his letters to Madame Epinay, that it appeared to him to come from the same hand with the *Christianisme Devoilé* and the *Militaire Philosophe*, the editors remark in a note, " On peut rendre hommage à la sagacité de l'Abbé Galiani. Le *Christianisme Devoilé* est en effet le premier ouvrage Philosophique du Baron d'Holbach. C'est en vain que la *Biographie Universelle* nous assure, d'après le temoignage de Voltaire, que cet ouvrage est de Damilaville."

Having mentioned the name of Damilaville, I am tempted to add, that the article relating to him in the *Biographie Universelle*, notwithstanding the incorrectness with which it is charged in the foregoing passage, is not unworthy of the reader's attention, as it contains some very remarkable marginal notes on the *Christianisme Devoilé*, copied from Voltaire's own hand writing.

Since writing the above note, I have seen the *Memoirs of M. Suard*, by M. Garat (Paris, 1820), in which the biographer, whose authority on this point is perfectly decisive, ascribes with confidence to Baron d'Holbach the *Système de la Nature*, and also a work entitled *La Morale et La Legislation Universelle*. (Vol. I. pp. 210, 211.)

According to the same author, the Baron d'Holbach was one of Diderot's proselytes. (*Ibid.* p. 208.) His former creed, it would appear, had been very different.

² And yet Diderot, in some of his lucid intervals, seems to have thought and felt very differently. See Note (BB.)

In order, however, to prevent misapprehension of my meaning, it is proper for me to caution my readers against supposing that *all* the eminent French philosophers of this period were of the same school with Grimm and Diderot. On this subject many of our English writers have been misled by taking for granted that to speak lightly of final causes is, of itself, sufficient proof of atheism. That this is a very rash as well uncharitable conclusion, no other proof is necessary than the manner in which final causes are spoken of by Descartes himself, the great object of whose metaphysical writings plainly was, to establish by demonstration the existence of God. The following vindication of this part of the Cartesian philosophy has been lately offered by a French divine, and it may be extended with equal justice to Buffon and many others of Descartes's successors: "Quelques auteurs, et particulièrement Leibnitz, ont critiqué cette partie de la doctrine de Descartes; mais nous la croyons irréprochable, si on veut bien l'entendre, et remarquer que Descartes ne parle que des *Fins totales* de Dieu. Sans doute, le soleil par exemple, et les étoiles, ont été faits pour l'homme, dans ce sens, que Dieu, en les créant, a eu en vue l'utilité de l'homme; et cette utilité a été sa fin. Mais cette utilité a-t-elle été l'unique fin de Dieu? Croit-on qu'en lui attribuant d'autres fins, on affoiblirait la reconnaissance de l'homme, et l'obligation ou il est de louer et de bénir Dieu dans toutes ses œuvres? Les auteurs de la vie spirituelle, les plus mystiques même, et les plus accrédités, ne l'ont pas cru." (M. l'Abbé Emery, *Editor of the Thoughts of Descartes upon Religion and Morals*, Paris, 1811, p. 79.)

As to the unqualified charge of atheism, which has been brought by some French ecclesiastics against all of their countrymen that have presumed to differ from the tenets of the Catholic church, it will be admitted, with large allowances, by every candid Presbyterian, when it is recollected

that something of the same illiberality formerly existed under the comparatively enlightened establishment of England. In the present times, the following anecdote would appear incredible, if it did not rest on the unquestionable testimony of Dr. Jortin : " I heard Dr. B. say in a sermon, if any one denies the uninterrupted succession of bishops, I shall not scruple to call him a downright atheist. This, when I was young (Jortin adds), was sound, orthodox, and fashionable doctrine." (*Tracts*, Vol. I. p. 436.)¹

How far the effects of that false philosophy of which Grimm's correspondence exhibits so dark and so authentic a picture, were connected with the awful revolution which soon after followed, it is not easy to say. That they contributed greatly to blacken its atrocities, as well as to revolt against it the feelings of the whole Christian world, cannot be disputed. The experiment was indeed tremendous, to set loose the passions of all classes of men from the restraints imposed by religious principles ; and the result exceeded, if possible, what could have been anticipated in theory. The lesson it has afforded has been dearly purchased ; but let us indulge the hope that it will not be thrown away on the generations which are to come.

A prediction, which Bishop Butler hazarded many years before, does honour to his political sagacity, as well as to his knowledge of human nature ;—that the spirit of irreligion would produce, some time or other, political disorders, similar to those which arose from religious fanaticism in the seventeenth century.²

¹ See Note (CC.)

² " Is there no danger that all this may raise somewhat like that levelling spirit, upon atheistical principles, which, in the last age, prevailed upon enthusiastic ones ? Not to speak of the possibility, that different sorts of people may unite in it upon these contrary principles." (*Sermon preached before the House of Lords*, January 30, 1741.)

Nearly about the time that the *Encyclopédie* was undertaken, another set of philosophers, since known by the name of *Economists*, formed themselves into an association for the purpose of enlightening the public on questions of political economy. The object of their studies seemed widely removed from all abstract discussion; but they had, nevertheless, a metaphysical system of their own, which, if it had been brought forward with less enthusiasm and exaggeration, might have been useful in counteracting the gloomy ideas then so generally prevalent about the order of the universe. The whole of their theory proceeds on the supposition that the arrangements of nature are wise and benevolent, and that it is the business of the legislator to study and co-operate with her plans in all his own regulations. With this principle, another was combined, that of the indefinite improvement of which the human mind and character are susceptible; an improvement which was represented as a natural and necessary consequence of wise laws; and which was pointed out to legislators as the most important advantage to be gained from their institutions.

These speculations, whatever opinion may be formed of their solidity, are certainly as remote as possible from any tendency to atheism, and still less do they partake of the spirit of that philosophy which would level man with the brute creation. With their practical tendency in a *political* view we are not at present concerned; but it would be an

As the fatal effect of both these extremes have, in the course of the two last centuries, been exemplified on so gigantic a scale in the two most civilized countries of Europe, it is to be hoped that mankind may in future derive some salutary admonitions from the experience of their predecessors. In the meantime, from that disposition common both to the higher and lower orders to pass suddenly from one extreme to another, it is at least possible that the strong reaction produced by the spirit of impiety during the French Revolution may, in the first instance, impel the multitude to something approaching to the puritanical fanaticism and frenzy of the Cromwellian Commonwealth.

unpardonable omission, after what has been just said of the metaphysical theories of the same period, not to mention the abstract principles involved in the economical system, as a remarkable exception to the general observation. It may be questioned, too, if the authors of this system, by incorporating their ethical views with their political disquisitions, did not take a more effectual step towards discountenancing the opinions to which they were opposed, than if they had attacked them in the way of direct argument.¹

On the metaphysical theories which issued from the French press during the latter half of the last century, I do not think it necessary for me to enlarge, after what I have so fully stated in some of my former publications. To enter into details with respect to particular works would be superfluous, as the remarks made upon any one of them are nearly applicable to them all. The excellent writings of M. Prevost, and of M. Degerando, will, it is to be hoped, gradually introduce into France a sounder taste in this branch of philosophy.² At present, so far as I am acquainted with the

¹ For some other observations on the Ethical principles assumed in the Economical System, see *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. Chap. iv. Section 6, § 1, towards the end.

² Some symptoms of such a reformation are admitted already to exist, by an author decidedly hostile to all philosophical systems. "Bacon, Locke, Condillac, cherchoient dans nos sens l'origine de nos idées; Helvetius y a trouvé nos idées elles-mêmes. Juger, selon ce philosophe, n'est autre chose que sentir.*"

* I was somewhat surprised, in looking over very lately the *Principia* of Descartes, to find (what had formerly escaped me), that the mode of speaking objected to in the above paragraph may plead in its favour the authority of that philosopher: "Cogitationis nomine, intelligo illa omnia, quæ nobis conscius in nobis fiunt, quatenus eorum in nobis conscientia est: Atque ita non modo intelligere, velle, imaginari, sed etiam sentire, idem est hic quod cogitare." (*Princ. Phil.* p. 2.) Dr. Reid, too, has said that "the sensation of colour is a sort of thought" (*Inquiry*, Chap. vi. § 4); but no names, how great soever, can sanction so gross an abuse of language.

After all, there is some difference between saying, that sensation is a sort of thought, and that thought is a sort of sensation.

state of what is called *Idéologie* in that country, it does not appear to me to furnish much matter either for the instruction or amusement of my readers.

The works of Rousseau have, in general, too slight a connection with metaphysical science, to come under review in this part of my discourse. But to his *Emile*, which has been regarded as a supplement to Locke's *Treatise on Education*, some attention is justly due, on account of various original and sound suggestions on the management of the infant mind, which, among many extravagancies savouring strongly both of intellectual and moral insanity, may be gathered by a sober and discriminating inquirer. The estimate of the merits of this work, formed by Mr. Gray, appears to me so just and impartial, that I shall adopt it here without a comment.

"I doubt" (says he, in a letter to a friend) "you have not yet read Rousseau's *Emile*. Every body that has children should read it more than once; for though it abounds with his usual glorious absurdity, though his general scheme of education be an impracticable chimera, yet there are a thousand lights struck out, a thousand important truths better expressed than ever they were before, that may be of service to the wisest men. Particularly, I think he has observed children with more attention, knows their meaning, and the working of their little passions, better than any other writer. As to his religious discussions, which have alarmed the world, and engaged their thoughts more than

Aujourd'hui les bons esprits, éclairés par les événemens sur la secrete tendance de toutes ces opinions, les ont soumises à un examen plus sévère. La *transformation* des sensations en idées ne paroît plus qu'un mot vide de sens. On trouve que *l'homme statue* ressemble un peu trop à *l'homme machine*, et Condillac est modifié ou même combattu sur quelques points, par tous ceux qui s'en servent encore dans l'enseignement philosophique." (*Recherches Philosophiques*, &c. par M. de Bonald, Tome I. pp. 34, 35.)

any other parts of his book, I set them all at nought, and wish they had been omitted." Gray's *Works by Mason*, Letter 49.)

The most valuable additions made by French writers to the philosophy of the Human Mind are to be found, not in their systematical treatises on metaphysics, but in those more popular compositions, which, professing to paint the prevailing manners of the times, touch occasionally on the varieties of intellectual character. In this most interesting and important study, which has been hitherto almost entirely neglected in Great Britain,¹ France must be allowed not only to have led the way, but to remain still unrivalled. It would be endless to enumerate names; but I must not pass over

¹ Many precious hints connected with it may, however, be collected from the writings of Lord Bacon, and a few from those of Mr. Locke. It does not seem to have engaged the curiosity of Mr. Hume in so great a degree as might have been expected from his habits of observation, and extensive intercourse with the world. The objects of Dr. Reid's inquiries led him into a totally different track.

Among German writers, Leibnitz has occasionally glanced with a penetrating eye at the varieties of genius; and it were to be wished that he had done so more frequently. How far his example has been followed by his countrymen in later times, I am unable to judge, from my ignorance of their language.

A work expressly on this subject was published by a Spanish physician (Huarte) in the seventeenth century. A French translation of it, printed at Amsterdam in 1672, is now lying before me. It is entitled, *Examen des Esprits pour les Sciences. Ou se montrent les differences des Esprits, qui se trouvent parmi les hommes et à quel genre de Science un chacun est propre en particulier.* The execution of this work certainly falls far short of the expectations raised by the title; but (allowances being made for the period when it was written) it is by no means destitute of merit, nor unworthy of the attention of those who may speculate on the subject of Education. For some particulars about its contents, and also about the author, see Bayle's *Dictionary*, Art. *Huarte*; and *The Spectator*, No. 30.

those of Vauvenargues¹ and Duclos.² Nor can I forbear to remark, in justice to an author whom I have already very

¹ The Marquis de Vauvenargues, author of a small volume, entitled, *Introduction à la Connoissance de l'Esprit Humain*. He entered into the army at the age of eighteen, and continued to serve for nine years; when, having lost his health irrecoverably, in consequence of the fatigues he underwent in the memorable retreat from Prague, in December 1742, he resolved to quit his profession, in the hope of obtaining some diplomatic employment better suited to his broken constitution. Soon after, he was attacked by the small-pox, which unfortunately turned out of so malignant a kind, as to disfigure his countenance and deprive him almost totally of sight. He died in 1747, at the age of thirty-two. The small volume above mentioned was published the year before his death. It bears everywhere the marks of a powerful, original, and elevated mind; and the imperfect education which the author appears to have received gives it an additional charm, as the genuine result of his own unsophisticated reflections.

Marmontel has given a most interesting picture of his social character: "En le lisant, je crois encore l'entendre, et je ne sais si sa conversation n'avait pas même quelque chose de plus animé, de plus délicat que ses divins écrits." And, on a different occasion, he speaks of him thus: "Doux, sensible, compatissant, il tenait nos âmes dans ses mains. Une sérénité inaltérable dérobait ses douleurs aux yeux de l'amitié. Pour soutenir l'adversité, on n'avoit besoin que de son exemple; et témoin de l'égalité de son âme, on n'osait être malheureux avec lui."

If the space allotted to him in this note should be thought to exceed what is due to his literary eminence, the singular circumstances of his short and unfortunate life, and the deep impression which his virtues, as well as his talents, appear to have left on the minds of all who knew him, will, I trust, be a sufficient apology for my wish to add something to the celebrity of a name, hitherto, I believe, very little known in this country.

² The work of Duclos, here referred to, has for its title, *Considérations sur les Mœurs de ce Siècle*. Gibbon's opinion of this book is, I think, not beyond its merits: "L'ouvrage en général est bon. Quelques chapitres (le rapport de l'esprit et du caractère) me paroissent excellent." (*Extrait du Journal*.)

I have said nothing of La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, as their attention was chiefly confined to manners, and to moral qualities. Yet many of their remarks show, that they had not wholly overlooked the diversities among men in point of intellect. An observer of sagacity equal to their's might, I should

freely censured, that a variety of acute and refined observations on the different modifications of genius may be collected from the writings of Helvetius. The soundness of some of his distinctions may perhaps be questioned; but even his attempts at classification may serve as useful guides to future observers, and may supply them with a convenient nomenclature, to which it is not always easy to find corresponding terms in other languages. As examples of this it is sufficient to mention the following phrases: *Esprit juste*, *Esprit borné*, *Esprit étendu*, *Esprit fin*, *Esprit délié*, *Esprit de lumière*. The peculiar richness of the French tongue in such appropriate expressions (a circumstance, by the way, which not unfrequently leads foreigners to overrate the depth of a talkative Frenchman) is itself a proof of the degree of attention which the ideas they are meant to convey have attracted in that country among the higher and more cultivated classes.

The influence, however, of the philosophical spirit on the general habits of thinking among men of letters in France, was in no instance displayed to greater advantage, than in the numerous examples of *theoretical* or *conjectural* history, which appeared about the middle of last century. I have already mentioned the attempts of Condillac and others, to trace upon this plan the first steps of the human mind in the invention of language. The same sort of speculation has been applied with greater success to the mechanical and other necessary arts of civilized life; and still more ingeniously and happily to the different branches of pure and mixed mathematics. To a philosophical mind, no study certainly can be more delightful than this species of history; but as an organ of instruction, I am not disposed to estimate its practical utility so highly as D'Alembert. It does not seem to me at all adapted to interest the curiosity of novices; nor is it so well calculated to engage the attention

think, find a rich field of study in this part of human nature, as well as in the other.

of those who wish to enlarge their scientific knowledge, as of persons accustomed to reflect on the phenomena and laws of the intellectual world.

Of the application of theoretical history, to account for the diversities of laws and modes of government among men, I shall have occasion afterwards to speak. "At present I shall only remark the common relation in which all such researches stand to the Philosophy of the Human Mind, and their common tendency to expand and to liberalize the views of those who are occupied in the more confined pursuits of the subordinate sciences.

After what has been already said of the general tone of French philosophy, it will not appear surprising, that a system so mystical and spiritual as that of Leibnitz never struck its roots deeply in that country. A masterly outline of its principles was published by Madame du Chatelet, at a period of her life when she was an enthusiastic admirer of the author; and a work on such a subject, composed by a lady of her rank and genius, could not fail to produce at first a very strong sensation at Paris; but not long after she herself abandoned the German philosophy, and became a zealous partizan of the Newtonian school. She even translated into French, and enriched with a commentary, the *Principia* of Newton; and by thus renouncing her first faith, contributed more to discredit it, than she had previously done to bring it into fashion. Since that time, Leibnitz has had few, if any, disciples in France, although some of his peculiar tenets have occasionally found advocates there, among those who have rejected the great and leading doctrines, by which his system is more peculiarly characterized. His opinions and reasonings in particular, on the necessary concatenation of all events, both physical and moral (which accorded but too well with the philosophy professed by Grimm and Diderot), have been long incorporated with the doctrines of the French materialists, and they have been lately adopted

and sanctioned, in all their extent, by a living author, the unrivalled splendour of whose mathematical genius may be justly suspected, in the case of some of his admirers, to throw a false lustre on the dark shades of his philosophical creed.¹

¹ “ Les événemens actuels ont avec les précédens une liaison fondée sur le principe évident, qu’une chose ne peut pas commencer d’être, sans une cause qui la produise. Cet axiome, connu sous le nom de *principe de la raison suffisante*, s’étend aux actions même que l’on juge indifférentes. La volonté la plus libre ne peut, sans un motif déterminant, leur donner naissance ; car si, toutes les circonstances de deux positions étant exactement semblables, elle agissoit dans l’une et s’abstenoit d’agir dans l’autre, son choix seroit un effet sans cause ;* elle seroit alors, dit Leibnitz, le *hazard aveugle* des Epicuriens. L’opinion contraire est une illusion de l’esprit qui perdant de vue les raisons fugitives du choix de la volonté dans les choses indifférentes, se persuade qu’elle s’est déterminée d’elle même et sans motifs.

“ Nous devons donc envisager l’état présent de l’univers comme l’effet de son état antérieure et comme la cause de celui qui va suivre. Une intelligence qui pour un instant donné connoitroit toutes les forces dont la nature est animée, et la situation respective des êtres qui la composent, si d’ailleurs elle étoit assez vaste pour soumettre ces données à l’analyse, embrasseroit dans la même formule, les mouvemens des plus grands corps de l’univers et ceux du plus léger atôme. Rien ne seroit incertain pour elle, et l’avenir comme le passé, seroit présent à ses yeux.” (*Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*, par Laplace.)

Is not this the very spirit of the *Theodicea* of Leibnitz, and, when combined with the other reasonings in the *Essay on Probabilities*, the very essence of Spinozism?

This, indeed, is studiously kept by the author out of the reader’s view ; and hence the facility with which some of his propositions have been admitted by many of his *mathematical* disciples, who, it is highly probable, were not aware of the consequences which they necessarily involve.

I cannot conclude this note without recurring to an observation ascribed in the above quotation from Laplace to Leibnitz,

* The impropriety of this language was long ago pointed out by Mr. Hume. “ They are still more frivolous, who say, that every effect must have a cause, because it is implied in the very idea of effect. Every effect necessarily presupposes a cause ; effect being a relative term, of which cause is the co-relative. The true state of the question is, whether every object, which begins to exist, must owe its existence to a cause?” (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 147.)

Notwithstanding, however, this important and unfortunate coincidence, no two systems can well be imagined more strongly contrasted on the whole, than the lofty metaphysics of Leibnitz, and that degrading theory concerning the origin of our ideas, which has been fashionable in France since the time of Condillac. In proof of this, I have only to refer to the account of both, which has been already given.

The same contrast, it would appear, still continues to exist between the favourite doctrines of the German and of the French schools. "In the French empiricism" (says a most

"that the *blind chance* of the Epicureans involves the supposition of an effect taking place without a cause." This, I apprehend, is a very incorrect statement of the philosophy taught by Lucretius, which nowhere gives the slightest countenance to such a supposition. The distinguishing tenet of this sect was, that the order of the universe does not imply the existence of *intelligent* causes; but may be accounted for by the active powers belonging to the atoms of matter; which active powers, being exerted through an indefinitely long period of time, *might* produce, nay, *must* have produced, exactly such a combination of things, as that with which we are surrounded. This, it is evident, does not call in question the necessity of a cause to produce every effect, but, on the contrary, virtually assumes the truth of that axiom. It only excludes from these causes the attribute of intelligence. It is in the same way when I apply the words blind chance (*hazard aveugle*) to the throw of a die, I do not mean to deny that I am ultimately the cause of the particular event that is to take place; but only to intimate that I do not here act as a *designing* cause, in consequence of my ignorance of the various accidents to which the die is subjected, while shaken in the box. If I am not mistaken, this *Epicurean Theory* approaches very nearly to the scheme, which it is the main object of the *Essay on Probabilities* to inculcate; and, therefore, it was not quite fair in Laplace to object to the supposition of man's free agency, as favouring those principles which he himself was labouring indirectly to insinuate.

From a passage in Plato's *Sophist*, it is very justly inferred by Mr. Gray, that, according to the *common* opinion then entertained, "the creation of things was the work of blind unintelligent matter; whereas the contrary was the result of philosophical reflection and disquisition believed by a few people only." (*Gray's Works* by Matthias, Vol. II. p. 414.) On the same subject, see Smith's *Posthumous Essays*, p. 106.

impartial, as well as competent judge, M. Ancillon), "the faculty of feeling, and the faculty of knowing, are one and the same. In the new philosophy of Germany, there is no faculty of knowing, but reason. In the former, taking our departure from individuals, we rise by degrees to ideas, to general notions, to principles. In the latter, beginning with what is most general, or rather with what is universal, we descend to individual existences, and to particular cases. In the one, what we see, what we touch, what we feel, are the only realities. In the other nothing is real, but what is invisible and purely intellectual."

"Both these systems (continues M. Ancillon) result from the exaggeration of a sound principle. They are both true and both false in part; true in what they admit, false in what they reject. All our knowledge begins, or appears to begin, in sensation; but it does not follow from this that it is all derived from sensation, or that sensation constitutes its whole amount. The proper and innate activity of the mind has a large share in the origin of our *representations*, our sentiments, our ideas. Reason involves principles which she does not borrow from without, which she owes only to herself, which the impressions of the senses call forth from their obscurity, but which, far from owing their origin to sensations, serve to appreciate them, to judge of them, to employ them as instruments. It would be rash, however, to conclude from hence, that there is no certainty but in reason, that reason alone can seize the mystery of existences, and the intimate nature of beings, and that experience is nothing but a vain appearance, destitute of every species of reality."

¹ *Mélanges de Littérature et de Philosophie*, par F. Ancillon, Préface. (à Paris, 1809.) The intimacy of M. Ancillon's literary connections both with France and with Germany entitle his opinions on the respective merits of their philosophical systems to peculiar weight. If he any where discovers a partiality for either, the modest account which he gives of himself would lead us to expect his leaning to be in favour of his coun-

With this short and comprehensive estimate of the new German philosophy, pronounced by one of the most distinguished members of the Berlin Academy, I might perhaps be pardoned for dismissing a subject, with which I have, in some of my former publications, acknowledged myself (from my total ignorance of the German language) to be very imperfectly acquainted; but the impression which it produced for a few years in England (more particularly while our intercourse with the Continent was interrupted), makes it proper for me to bestow on it a little more notice in this Dissertation, than I should otherwise have judged necessary or useful.

SECTION VII.

KANT AND OTHER METAPHYSICIANS OF THE NEW GERMAN SCHOOL.¹

THE long reign of the Leibnitzian Philosophy in Germany was owing, in no inconsiderable degree, to the zeal and abili-

trymen. “Placé entre la France et l’Allemagne, appartenant à la première par la langue dans laquelle je hasarde d’écrire, à la seconde par ma naissance, mes études, mes principes, mes affection, et j’ose le dire, par la couleur de ma pensée, je desirerois pouvoir servir de mediateur littéraire, ou d’interprète philosophique entre les deux nations.”

In translating from M. Ancillon, the passage quoted in the text, I have adhered as closely as possible to the words of the original; although I cannot help imagining that I could have rendered it still more intelligible to the English reader by laying aside some of the peculiarities of his German phraseology. My chief reason for retaining these, was to add weight to the strictures which a critic, so deeply tinctured with the German habits of thinking and of writing, has offered, on the most prominent faults of the systems in which he had been educated.

¹My ignorance of German would have prevented me from saying anything of the philosophy of Kant, if the extraordinary pretensions with which it was at first brought forward in this

ty with which it was taught in that part of Europe, for nearly half a century, by his disciple Wolfius,¹ a man of little genius, originality, or taste, but whose extensive and various learning, seconded by a methodical head,² and by an incredible

island, contrasted with the total oblivion into which it soon after very suddenly fell, had not seemed to demand some attention to so wonderful a phenomenon in the literary history of the eighteenth century. My readers will perceive that I have taken some pains to atone for my inability to read Kant's works in the original, not only by availing myself of the Latin version of Born, but by consulting various comments on them which have appeared in the English, French, and Latin languages. As commentators, however, and even translators, are not always to be trusted to as unexceptionable interpreters of their authors' opinions, my chief reliance has been placed on one of Kant's own compositions in Latin; his Dissertation *De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Forma et Principiis*, which he printed as the subject of a public disputation, when he was candidate for a Professorship in the University of Königsberg. It is far from being improbable, after all, that I may, in some instances, have misapprehended his meaning, but I hope I shall not be accused of wilfully misrepresenting it. Where my remarks are borrowed from other writers, I have been careful in referring to my authorities, that my reader may judge for himself of the fidelity of my statements. If no other purpose, therefore, should be answered by this part of my work, it may at least be of use by calling forth some person properly qualified to correct any mistakes into which I may involuntarily have fallen; and, in the meantime, may serve to direct those who are strangers to German literature, to some of the comments on this philosophy which have appeared in languages more generally understood in this country.

¹ Born 1679. Died 1754.

² The display of method, however, so conspicuous in all the works of Wolfius, will often be found to amount to little more than an awkward affectation of the phraseology and forms of mathematics, in sciences where they contribute nothing to the clearness of our ideas, or the correctness of our reasonings. This affectation, which seems to have been well adapted to the taste of Germany at the time when he wrote, is now one of the chief causes of the neglect into which his writings have fallen. Some of them may be still usefully consulted as dictionaries, but to read them is impossible. They amount to about forty quarto

industry and perseverance, seem to have been peculiarly fitted to command the admiration of his countrymen. Wolfius, indeed, did not profess to follow implicitly the opinions of his master, and, on some points, laid claim to peculiar ideas of his own; but the spirit of his philosophy is essentially the same with that of Leibnitz,¹ and the particulars in which he

volumes, twenty-three of which are in Latin, the rest in German.

In his own country the reputation of Wolfius is not yet at an end. In the preface to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he is called "Summus omnium dogmaticorum Philosophus." (*Kantii Opera ad Philosophiam Criticam*, Vol. I. Præf. Auctoris Posterior, p. xxxvi. Latine Vertit. Fred. Born. Lipsiæ, 1796). And by one of Kant's commentators, his name is advantageously contrasted with that of David Hume: "Est autem scientifica methodus aut dogmatica, aut sceptica. Primi generis autorem celeberrimum Wolfium, alterius Davidum Humium nominasse sat est." (*Expositio Philos. Criticæ*. Autore Conrado Friderico a Schmidt-Phiseldek, Hafniæ, 1796.)

¹ On the great question of Free-Will, Wolfius adopted implicitly the principles of the *Theodicæa*; considering man merely in the light of a *machine*; but (with the author of that work) dignifying this machine by the epithet *spiritual*. This language, which is still very prevalent among German philosophers, may be regarded as a relic of the doctrines of Leibnitz and of Wolfius; and affords an additional proof of the difficulty of eradicating errors sanctioned by illustrious and popular names.

When the system of Pre-established Harmony was first introduced by Wolfius into the University of Halle, it excited an alarm which had very nearly been attended with fatal consequences to the professor. The following anecdote on the subject is told by Euler: "Lorsque du temps du feu Roi de Prusse, M. Wolf enseignoit à Halle le système de l'Harmonie Pré-établie, le Roi s'informa de cette doctrine, qui faisoit grand bruit alors; et un courtisan répondit à sa Majesté, que tous les soldats, selon cette doctrine, n'étoient que des machines; que quand il en désertoit c'étoit une suite nécessaire de leur structure, et qu'on avoit tort par conséquent de les punir, comme on l'auroit si on punissoit une machine pour avoir produit tel ou tel mouvement. Le Roi se facha si fort sur ce rapport, qu'il donna ordre de chasser M. Wolf de Halle sous peine d'être pèndu s'il s'y trouvoit

dissented from him are too trifling to deserve any notice in the history of literature.¹

The high reputation so long maintained by Wolfius in Germany suggested, at different times, to the book-makers at Paris, the idea of introducing into France the philosophy which he taught. Hence a number of French abridgments of his logical and metaphysical writings. But an attempt, which had failed in the hands of Madame du Chatelet, was not likely to succeed with the admirers and abridgers of Wolfius.²

au bout de 24 heures. Le philosophe se refugia alors à Marbourg, où je lui ai parlé peu de temps après." (*Lettres à une Princesse d'Allemagne*, Lettre 84me.) We are informed by Condorcet, that some reparation was afterwards made for this injustice by Frederic the Great. "Le Roi de Prusse, qui ne croit pas pourtant à l'Harmonie Pré-établie, s'est empressé de rendre justice à Wolf dès le premier jour de son regne."

¹ Among other novelties affected by Wolfius, was a new modification of the Theory of the Monads. A slight outline of it, but quite sufficient, I should suppose, to gratify the curiosity of most readers, may be found in Euler's *Letters to a German Princess*.

² To what was before remarked, of the opposition in matters of philosophy between the taste of the French and that of the Germans, I shall here add a short passage from an author intimately acquainted with the literature of both nations.

"L'école Allemande reconnoit Leibnitz pour chef. Son fameux disciple Wolf régna dans les universités pendant près d'un demi siècle avec une autorité non contestée. On connoit en France cette philosophie par un grand nombre d'abregés dont quelques uns sont faits par des auteurs qui seuls auroient suffi pour lui donner de la célébrité.

"Malgré l'appui de tous ces noms, *jamais en France cette philosophie ne s'est soutenue meme quelques instans*. La profondeur apparente des idées, l'air d'ensemble et de système, n'ont jamais pu y suppléer à ce qui a paru lui manquer pour en faire une doctrine solide et digne d'être accueillie. Outre quelque défaut de clarté, qui probablement en a écarté des esprits pour qui cette qualité de style et de la pensée est devenue un heureux besoin, la forme sous laquelle elle se présente a rebuté bien des

From the time of Wolfius till the philosophy of Kant began to attract general notice, I know of no German metaphysician whose speculations seem to have acquired much celebrity in the learned world.¹ Lambert² is perhaps the most illustrious name which occurs during this interval. As a mathematician and natural philosopher, his great merits are universally known and acknowledged, but the language in which his metaphysical and logical works were written, has confined their reputation within a comparatively narrow circle. I am sorry that I cannot speak of these from my own knowledge ; but I have heard them mentioned in terms of the highest praise, by some very competent judges, to whose testimony I am disposed to give the greater credit, from the singular vein of originality which runs through all his mathematical and physical publications.³

lecteurs. Quoi qu'aient pu faire les interprètes, il a toujours percé quelque chose de l'appareil incommode qui l'entoure à son origine. Condillac tourne plus d'une fois en ridicule ces formes et ce jargon scientifique, et il s'applique à montrer qu'ils ne sont pas plus propres à satisfaire la raison que le goût. *Il est au moins certain, que le lecteur Français les repousse par instinct, et qu'il y trouve un obstacle très difficile à surmonter.*" (*Reflexions sur les Œuvres Posthumes d'Adam Smith*, par M. Prevost de Genève, à Paris, 1794.)

¹ Madame de Staël mentions Lessing, Hemsterhuis, and Jacobi, as precursors of Kant in his philosophical career. She adds, however, that they had no school, since none of them attempted to found any system ; but they began the war against the doctrines of the Materialists. (*Allemagne*, Tome III. p. 98.) I am not acquainted with the metaphysical works of any of the three. Those of Hemsterhuis, who wrote wholly in French, were, I understand, first published in a collected form at Paris, in 1792. He was son of the celebrated Greek scholar and critic, Tiberius Hemsterhusius, Professor of Latin Literature at Leyden.

² Born at Mulhausen in Alsace in 1728. Died at Berlin in 1777.

³ The following particulars, with respect to Lambert's literary history, are extracted from a *Memoir* annexed by M. Prevost to

The *Critique of Pure Reason* (the most celebrated of Kant's metaphysical works) appeared in 1781.¹ The idea annexed to the title by the author, is thus explained by him-

his translation of Mr. Smith's *Posthumous Works*: "Cet ingénieux et puissant Lambert, dont les mathématiques, qui lui doivent beaucoup, ne purent épuiser les forces, et qui ne toucha aucun sujet de physique ou de philosophie rationnelle, sans le couvrir de lumière. Ses *lettres cosmologiques*, qu'il écrivit par forme de délassement, sont pleines d'idées sublimes, entées sur la philosophie la plus saine et la plus savante tout-à-la-fois. Il avoit aussi dressé sous le titre d'*Architectonique* un tableau des principes sur lesquels se fondent les connoissances humaines. Cet ouvrage au jugement des hommes les plus versés dans l'étude de leur langue, n'est pas exempt d'obscurité. Elle peut tenir en partie à la nature du sujet. Il est à regretter que sa logique, intitulé *Organon*, ne soit traduite ni en Latin, ni en Français, ni je pense en aucune langue. Un extrait bien fait de cet ouvrage, duquel on écarteroit ce qui répugne au goût national, exciteroit l'attention des philosophes, et la porteroit sur une multitude d'objets qu'ils se sont accoutumés à regarder avec indifférence." (Prevost, Tome II. pp. 267, 268.)

In the article *Lambert*, inserted in the twenty-third volume of the *Biographie Universelle* (Paris, 1819), the following account is given of Lambert's logic: "Wolf, d'après quelques indications de Leibnitz, avoit retiré de l'oubli la syllogistique d'Aristote, science que les scholastiques avoient tellement avilie que ni Bacon ni Locke n'avoient osé lui accorder un regard d'intérêt. Il étoit réservé à Lambert de la montrer sous le plus beau jour et dans la plus riche parure. C'est ce qu'il a fait dans son *Novum Organon*, ouvrage qui est un des principaux titres de gloire de son auteur." From the writer of this article (M. Servois) we farther learn, that the *Novum Organon* of Lambert was translated into Latin from the German original by a person of the name of Pfeiderer, and that this translation was in the hands of an English nobleman (the late Earl of Stanhope) as lately as 1782. I quote the words of M. Servois, in the hope that they may attract some attention to the manuscript, if it be still in existence. The publication of it would certainly be a most acceptable present to the learned world. "D'après le conseil de Le Sage de Geneve, l'ouvrage fut traduit en Latin par Pfeiderer, aux frais d'un savant Italien; cette traduction passa, on ne sait comment, entre les mains de Milord Mahon qui la possédoit encore en 1782; on ignore quel est son sort ulterieur."

¹ Kant was born at Kœnigsberg, in Prussia, in 1724. He died, in 1804.

self: "Criticam rationis puræ non dico censuram librorum et Systematum, sed facultatis rationalis in universum, respectu cognitionum omnium, ad quas, ab omni experientia libera, possit anniti, proinde dijudicationem possibilitatis aut impossibilitatis metaphysices in genere, constitutionemque tum fontium, tum ambitus atque compagis, tum vero terminorum illius, sed cuncta haec ex principiis." (Kantii, *Opera ad Philosophiam Criticam*, Vol. I. Præfatio Auctoris Prior. pp. xi. xii.) To render this somewhat more intelligible, I shall subjoin the comment of one of his intimate friends,¹ whose work, we are informed by Dr. Willich, had received the sanction of Kant himself. "The aim of Kant's *Critique* is no less than to lead Reason to the true knowledge of itself; to examine the titles upon which it founds the supposed possession of its metaphysical knowledge; and by means of this examination to mark the true limits, beyond which it cannot venture to speculate, without wandering into the empty region of pure fancy." The same author adds, "The whole *Critique of Pure Reason* is established upon this principle, *that there is a free reason, independent of all experience and sensation.*"

When the *Critique of Pure Reason* first came out, it does not seem to have attracted much notice,² but such has been

¹ Mr. John Schulze, an eminent divine at Königsberg, author of the *Synopsis of the Critical Philosophy*, translated by Dr. Willich, and inserted in his *Elementary View of Kant's Works*. (See pp. 42, 43.)

² "Il se passa quelque tems après la première publication de la *Critique de la Pure Raison*, sans qu'on fit beaucoup d'attention à ce livre, et sans que la plupart de philosophes, passionés pour l'éclectisme soupçonnassent seulement la grande révolution que cet ouvrage et les productions suivantes de son auteur devoient opérer dans la science." (Buhle, *Hist. de la Phil. Mod.* Tom. VI. p. 573. Paris, 1816.)

As early, however, as the year 1783, the philosophy of Kant appears to have been adopted in *some* of the German schools. The ingenious M. Trembley, in a memoir then read

its subsequent success, that it may be regarded (according to Madame de Staël)¹ “as having given the impulse

before the Academy of Berlin, thus speaks of it: “La Philosophie de Kant, qui à la honte de l'esprit humain, paroît avoir acquis tant de faveur dans certaines écoles.” (*Essai sur les Préjugés*. Reprinted at Neufchatel in 1790.)

We are farther told by Buhle, that the attention of the public to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was first attracted by an excellent analysis of the work, which appeared in the *General Gazette of Literature*, and by the *Letters on Kant's Philosophy*, which Reinhold inserted in the *German Mercury*. (Buhle, l'om. VI. p. 573.) Of this last philosopher, who appears, in the first instance, to have entered with enthusiasm into Kant's views, and who afterwards contributed much to open the eyes of his countrymen to the radical defects of his system, I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Degerando, as well as Buhle, bestows high praise not only on his clearness, but on his eloquence, as a writer in his own language. “Il a traduit les oracles Kantiens dans une langue élégante, harmonieuse, et pure * * * Il a su exprimer avec un langage éloquent, des idées jusqu'alors inintelligibles,” &c. (*Histoire Comparée*, &c. Tom. II. p. 271.) That this praise is not undeserved I am very ready to believe, having lately had an opportunity (through the kindness of my learned and revered friend Dr. Parr) of reading, in the Latin version of Fredericus Gottlob Born, Reinhold's principal work, entitled *Periculum Novæ Theoriæ Facultatis Representativæ Humanæ*. In point of perspicuity, he appears to me to be greatly superior to Kant; and of this I conceive myself to be not altogether incompetent to judge, as the Latin versions of both authors are by the same hand.

¹ The following quotation, from the advertisement prefixed to Madame de Staël's posthumous work (*Considérations sur la Révolution Française*), will at once account to my readers for the confidence with which I appeal to her historical statements on the subject of German philosophy. Her own knowledge of the language was probably not so critically exact, as to enable her to enter into the more refined details of the different systems which she has described; but her extraordinary penetration, joined to the opportunities she enjoyed of conversing with all that was then most illustrious in Germany, qualified her in an eminent degree to seize and to delineate their great outlines. And if, in executing this task, any considerable mistakes could have been supposed to escape her, we may be fully assured, that the very accomplished person, to whose revision

to all that has been since done in Germany, both in literature and in philosophy." (*Allemagne*, Vol. III. pp. 68, 69.)

"At the epoch when this work was published (continues the same writer), there existed among thinking men only two systems concerning the Human understanding: The one, that of Locke, ascribed all our ideas to our sensations ;¹

we learn that her literary labours at this period of her life were submitted, would prevent them from ever meeting the public eye. I except, of course, those mistakes into which she was betrayed by her admiration of the German school. Of some of the most important of these, I shall take notice as I proceed ; a task which I feel incumbent on me, as it is through the medium of her book that the great majority of English readers have acquired all their knowledge of the new German philosophy, and as her name and talents have given it a temporary consequence in this country which it could not otherwise have acquired.

"Le travail des éditeurs s'est borné uniquement à la révision des épreuves, et à la correction de ces légères inexactitudes de style, qui échappent à la vue dans le manuscrit le plus soigné. Ce travail c'est fait sous les yeux de M. A. W. de Schlegel, dont la rare supériorité d'esprit et de savoir justifie la confiance avec laquelle Madame de Staël le consultoit dans tous ses travaux littéraires, autant que son honorable caractère mérite l'estime et l'amitié qu'elle n'a pas cessé d'avoir pour lui pendant une liaison de treize années."

If any farther apology be necessary for quoting a French lady as an authority on German metaphysics, an obvious one is suggested by the extraordinary and well merited popularity of her *Allemagne* in this country. I do not know, if, in any part of her works, her matchless powers have been displayed to greater advantage. Of this no stronger proof can be given, than the lively interest she inspires, even when discussing such systems as those of Kant and of Fichte.

¹ That this is a very incorrect account of Locke's philosophy, has been already shown at great length ; but in this mistake Madame de Staël has only followed Leibnitz, and a very large proportion of the German philosophers of the present day. "The philosophy of sensation (says Frederick Schlegel,) which was unconsciously bequeathed to the world by Bacon, and reduced to a methodical shape by Locke, first displayed in France

the other, that of Descartes and of Leibnitz, had for its chief objects to demonstrate the spirituality and activity of the soul, the freedom of the will,¹ and, in short, the whole

the true immorality and destructiveness of which it is the parent, and assumed the appearance of a perfect system of Atheism." (*Lectures on the History of Literature*, from the German of Fred. Schlegel. Edin. 1818, Vol. II. p. 22.) It is evident, that the system of Locke is here confounded with that of Condillac. May not the former be called the philosophy of *reflection*, with as great propriety as the philosophy of *sensation*?

¹In considering Leibnitz as a partizan of the freedom of the will, Madame de Staël has also followed the views of many German writers, who make no distinction between Materialists and Necessitarians, imagining, that to assert the spirituality of the soul, is to assert its free-agency. On the inaccuracy of these conceptions it would be superfluous to enlarge, after what was formerly said in treating of the metaphysical opinions of Leibnitz.

In consequence of this misapprehension, Madame de Staël, and many other late writers on the Continent, have been led to employ, with a very exceptionable latitude, the word *Idealist*, to comprehend not only the advocates for the immateriality of the mind, but those also who maintain the Freedom of the Human Will. Between these two opinions, there is certainly no necessary connection; Leibnitz, and many other German metaphysicians, denying the latter with no less confidence than that with which they assert the former.

In England, the word *Idealist* is most commonly restricted to such as (with Berkeley) reject the existence of a material world. Of late, its meaning has been sometimes extended (particularly since the publications of Reid) to all those who retain the theory of Descartes and Locke, concerning the immediate objects of our perceptions and thoughts, whether they admit or reject the consequences deduced from this theory by the Berkeleians. In the present state of the science, it would contribute much to the distinctness of our reasonings, were it to be used in this last sense exclusively.

There is another word to which Madame de Staël and other writers on the German philosophy annex an idea peculiar to themselves; I mean the word *experimental* or *empirical*. This epithet is often used by them to distinguish what they call the Philosophy of Sensations, from that of Plato and of Leibnitz. It is accordingly generally, if not always, employed by them in an unfavourable sense. In this country, on the contrary, the

doctrines of the idealists. Between these extremes reason continued to wander, till Kant undertook to trace the limits of the two empires ; of the senses and of the soul ; of the external and of the internal worlds. The force of meditation and of sagacity, with which he marked these limits, had not perhaps any example among his predecessors." (*Allemagne*, Vol. III. pp. 70, 72.)

The praise bestowed on this part of Kant's philosophy, by one of his own pupils, is not less warm than that of Madame de Staël. I quote the passage, as it enters into some historical details which she has omitted, and describes more explicitly than she has done one of the most important steps, which Kant is supposed by his disciples to have made beyond his predecessors. In reading it, some allowances must be made for the peculiar phrasology of the German school.

"Kant *discovered* that the intuitive faculty of man is a compound of very dissimilar ingredients ; or, in other words, that it consists of parts very different in their nature, each of which performs functions peculiar to itself ;

experimental or inductive philosophy of the human mind denotes those speculations concerning mind, which, rejecting all hypothetical theories, rest solely on phenomena for which we have the evidence of consciousness. It is applied to the philosophy of Reid, and to all that is truly valuable in the metaphysical works of Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

Nor are the words *Experimental* and *Empirical* by any means synonymous in our language. The latter word is now almost exclusively appropriated to the practice of Medicine ; and when so understood always implies a rash and unphilosophical use of Experience. "The appellation *Empiric* (says the late Dr. John Gregory) is generally applied to one who, from observing the effects of a remedy in one case of a disease, applies it to all the various cases of that distemper." The same remark may be extended to the word *Empirique* in the French language, which is very nearly synonymous with *Charlatan*. In consequence of this abuse of terms, the epithet *experimental*, as well as *empirical*, is seldom applied by foreign writers to the philosophy of Locke, without being intended to convey a censure.

namely, the *sensitive faculty*, and the *understanding*. Leibnitz, indeed, had likewise remarked the distinction subsisting between the sensitive faculty and the understanding ; but he entirely overlooked the essential difference between their functions, and was of opinion that the faculties differed from one another only in degree. In the works of the English and French philosophers, we find this essential distinction between the sensitive and the intellectual faculties, and their combination towards producing one synthetical intuition scarcely mentioned. Locke only alludes to the accidental limitations of both faculties ; but to inquire into the essential difference between them does not at all occur to him. This distinction, then, between the sensitive and the intellectual faculties, forms an essential feature in the philosophy of Kant, and is, indeed, the basis upon which most of his subsequent inquiries are established.” (*Elements of the Cri. Phil.* by A. F. M. Willich, M. D. pp. 68, 69, 70.)

It is a circumstance not easily explicable, that, in the foregoing historical sketch, no mention is made of the name of Cudworth, author of the treatise on *Eternal and Immutable Morality* ; a book which could scarcely fail to be known, before the period in question, to every German scholar, by the admirable Latin version of it published by Dr. Mosheim.¹ In this treatise, Cudworth is at much pains to il-

¹ The first edition of this translation was printed as early as 1732. From Buhle's *History of Modern Philosophy* (a work which did not fall into my hands till long after this section was written), I find that Cudworth's *Treatise of Immutable Morality* is now not only well known to the scholars of Germany, but that some of them have remarked the identity of the doctrines contained in it with those of Kant. “ Meiners, dans son histoire générale de l'Ethique nie que le système morale de Cudworth soit identique avec celui de Platon, et prétend au contraire, ‘ que les principes considérés comme appartenans de la manière la plus spéciale à la morale de Kant, étaient enseignés il y a déjà plusieurs générations par l'école du philosophe Anglais.”

illustrate the Platonic doctrine concerning the difference between sensation and intellection; asserting that "some ideas of the mind proceed not from outward sensible objects, but arise from the inward activity of the mind itself;" that "even simple corporeal things, passively perceived by sense, are known and understood only by the active power of the mind;" and that, besides *Αισθηματα* and *Φαντασματα*, there must be *Νοηματα* or intelligible ideas, the source of which can be traced to the understanding alone.¹

(*Hist. de la Phil. Moderne*, Tom. III. p. 577.) In opposition to this, Buhle states his own decided conviction—"qu'aucune des idées de Cudworth ne se rapproche de celles de Kant." (*Ibid.*) How far this conviction is well founded, the passage from Cudworth, quoted in the text, will enable my readers to judge for themselves.

That Cudworth has blended with his principles a vein of Platonic mysticism, which is not to be found in Kant, is undeniable; but it does not follow from this, that none of Kant's leading ideas are borrowed from the writings of Cudworth.

The assertion of Buhle, just mentioned, is the more surprising, as he himself acknowledges that—"La philosophie morale de Price présente en effet une analogie frappante avec celle de Kant;" and in another part of his work, he expresses himself thus on the same subject: "Le plus remarquable de tous les moralistes modernes de l'Angleterre est, sans contredit, Richard Price. On remarque l'analogie la plus frappante entre ses idées sur les bases de la moralité, et celles que la philosophie critique a fait naître en Allemagne, quoique il ne soit cependant pas possible d'élever le plus petit doute sur l'entière originalité de ces dernières." (Tom. V. p. 303.) Is there any thing of importance in the system of Price, which is not borrowed from the *Treatise of Immutible Morality*? The distinguishing merit of this learned and most respectable writer is the good sense with which he has applied the doctrines of Cudworth to the sceptical theories of his own times.

In the sequel of Buhle's reflections on Cudworth's philosophy, we are told, that, according to him, "the will of God is only a simple blind power, acting mechanically or accidentally." ("Chez Cudworth la volonté même en Dieu, n'est qu'un simple pouvoir aveugle, agissant mécaniquement ou accidentellement.") If this were true, Cudworth ought to be ranked among the disciples, not of Plato, but of Spinoza.

¹In this instance, a striking resemblance is observable between the language of Cudworth and that of Kant; both of

In the course of his speculations on these subjects, Cudworth has blended, with some very deep and valuable discussions, several opinions to which I cannot assent, and not a few propositions which I am unable to comprehend; but he seems to have advanced at least as far as Kant, in drawing the line between the provinces of the senses and of the understanding; and although not one of the most luminous of our English writers, he must be allowed to be far superior to the German metaphysician, both in point of perspicuity and of precision. A later writer, too, of our own country (Dr. Price), a zealous follower both of Plato and of Cudworth, afterwards resumed the same argument, in a work which appeared long before the *Critique of Pure Reason*;¹ and urged it with much force against those modern metaphysicians, who consider the senses as the sources of all our knowledge. At a period somewhat earlier, many very interesting quotations of a similar import had been produced by the learned Mr. Harris, from the later commentators of the Alexandrian school on the philosophy of Aristotle; and had been advantageously contrasted by him with the account given of the origin of our ideas, not only by Hobbes and Gassendi, but by many of the professed followers of Locke. If this part of the Kantian system, therefore, was new in Germany, it certainly could have no claim to the praise of originality, in the estimation of those at all acquainted with English literature.²

them having followed the distinctions of the Socratic school, as explained in the *Theætetus* of Plato. They who are at all acquainted with Kant's *Critique*, will immediately recognise his phraseology in the passage quoted above.

¹ See a review of the *Principal Questions and Difficulties relating to Morals*, by Richard Price, D. D. London, 1758.

² I have mentioned here only those works of a modern date, which may be reasonably presumed to be still in general circu-

In order, however, to strike at the root of what the Germans call the *philosophy of sensation*, it was necessary to trace, with some degree of systematical detail, the origin of our most important *simple notions*; and for this purpose it seemed reasonable to begin with an analytical view

lation among the learned. But many very valuable illustrations of the Platonic distinction between the senses and the understanding may be collected from the English writers of the seventeenth century. Among these it is sufficient to mention at present the names of John Smith and Henry More of Cambridge, and of Joseph Glanville, the author of *Scepsis Scientifica*.

Cudworth's *Treatise of Eternal and Immutable Morality*, although it appears, from intrinsic evidence, to have been composed during the lifetime of Hobbes, was not published till 1731, when the author's manuscript came into the hands of his grandson, Francis Cudworth Masham, one of the Masters in Chancery. This work, therefore, could not have been known to Leibnitz, who died seventeen years before; a circumstance which may help to account for its having attracted so much less attention in Germany than his *Intellectual System*, which is repeatedly mentioned by Leibnitz in terms of the highest praise.

From an article in the *Edinburgh Review* (Vol. XXVII. p. 191), we learn, that large unpublished manuscripts of Dr. Cudworth are deposited in the British Museum. It is much to be regretted (as the author of the article observes), that they should have been so long withheld from the public. "The press of the two Universities (he adds) would be properly employed in works, which a commercial publisher could not prudently undertake." May we not indulge a hope, that this suggestion will, sooner or later, have its due effect?

In the preface of Mosheim to his Latin version of the *Intellectual System*, there is a catalogue of Cudworth's unpublished remains, communicated to Mosheim by Dr. Chandler, then Bishop of Durham. Among these are two distinct works on the Controversy concerning Liberty and Necessity, of each of which works Mosheim has given us the general contents. One of the chapters is entitled, "Answer to the Objection against Liberty, μηδεν αναγκη." It is not probable that it contains any thing very new or important; but it would certainly be worth while to know the reply made by Cudworth to an objection which both Leibnitz and La Place have fixed upon as decisive of the point in dispute.

of those faculties and powers, to the exercise of which the developement of these notions is necessarily subsequent. It is thus that the simple notions of *time* and *motion* presuppose the exercise of the faculty of memory; and that the simple notions of *truth*, of *belief*, of *doubt*, and many others of the same kind, necessarily presuppose the exercise of the power of reasoning. I do not know, that, in this anatomy of the mind, much progress has hitherto been made by the German metaphysicians. A great deal certainly has been accomplished by the late Dr. Reid; and something, perhaps, has been added to his labours by those of his successors.

According to Kant himself, his metaphysical doctrines first occurred to him while employed in the examination of Mr. Hume's *Theory of Causation*. The train of thought by which he was led to them will be best stated in his own words; for it is in this way alone that I can hope to escape the charge of misrepresentation from his followers. Some of his details would perhaps have been more intelligible to my readers, had my plan allowed me to prefix to them a slight outline of Hume's philosophy. But this the general arrangement of my discourse rendered impossible; nor can any material inconvenience result, in this instance, from the order which I have adopted, inasmuch as Hume's *Theory of Causation*, how new soever it may have appeared to Kant, is fundamentally the same with that of Malebranche, and of a variety of other old writers, both French and English.

¹ "Since the *Essays* (says Kant) of Locke and of Leibnitz, or rather since the origin of metaphysics, as far as

¹ See the preface of Kant to one of his Treatises, entitled *Prolegomena ad Metaphysicam quamque futuram quæ qua Scientia poterit prodire*. I have availed myself in the text of the English version of Dr. Willich, from the German original, which I have carefully compared with the Latin version of Born. A

their history extends, no circumstance has occurred, which might have been more decisive of the fate of this science than the attack made upon it by David Hume.¹ He proceeded upon a single but important idea in metaphysics, the connection of cause and effect, and the concomitant notions of power and action. He challenged *reason* to answer him what title she had to imagine, that any thing may be so constituted as that, if it be given, something else is also thereby inferred; for the idea of cause denotes this. He proved beyond contradiction, that it is impossible for reason to think of such a connection *à priori*, for it contains *necessity*; but it is not possible to perceive how, because something is, something else must necessarily be; nor how the idea of such a connection can be introduced *à priori*.

“Hence, he concluded, that reason entirely deceives herself with this idea, and that she erroneously considers it as her own child, when it is only the spurious offspring of imagination, impregnated by experience; a *subjective* necessity, arising from habit and the association of ideas being thus substituted for an *objective* one derived from perception. . . . However hasty and unwarrantable Hume’s conclusion might appear, yet it was founded upon investigation; and this investigation well deserved, that some of the philosophers of his time should have united to solve, more happily if possible, the problem in the sense in which he delivered it: A complete reform of the science might have resulted from this

few sentences, omitted by Willich, I have thought it worth while to quote, at the foot of the page, from the Latin translation. (*Elem. of Critical Philosophy*, by A. F. M. Willich, M. D. p. 10. *et seq.* London, 1798.)

¹ “*Humi*.—Qui quidem nullam huic cognitionis parti lucem adfudit, sed tamen excitavit scintillam, de quâ sane lumen potuisset accendi, si ea incidisset in fomitem, facile accipientem, cujusque scintillatio diligenter alta fuerit et aucta.”

solution. But it is a mortifying reflection, that his opponents, Reid, Beattie, Oswald, and, lastly, Priestley himself, totally misunderstood the *tendency* of his problem.¹ The question was not, whether the idea of cause be in itself proper and indispensable to the illustration of all natural knowledge, for this Hume had never doubted; but whether this idea be an object of thought through reasoning *à priori*; and whether, in this manner, it possesses internal evidence, independently of all experience; consequently, whether its utility be not limited to objects of sense alone. It was upon this point that Hume expected an explanation.²

“ I freely own it was these suggestions of Hume’s which first, many years ago, roused me from my dogmatical slumber, and gave to my inquiries quite a different direction in the field of speculative philosophy. I was far from being carried away by his conclusions, the fallacy of which chiefly arose from his not forming to himself an idea of the *whole of his problem*, but merely investigating a part of it, the solution of which was impossible without a comprehensive view of the whole. When we proceed on a well founded, though not thoroughly digested thought, we may expect, by patient and continued reflection, to prosecute it farther than the acute genius had done to whom we are indebted

¹ “ Non potest sine certo quodam molestiæ sensu percipi, quantopere ejus adversarii, *Reidius, Oswaldus, Beattius*, et tandem *Priestleius*, a scopo quæstionis aberrarent, et propterea, quod ea semper acciperent pro concessis, quæ ipse in dubium vocaret, contra vero cum vehementia, et maximam partem cum ingenti immodestia ea probare gestirent, quæ illi nunquam in mentem venisset dubitare, *nutum* ejus ad emendationem ita negligerent, ut omnia in statu pristino manerent, quasi nihil quidquam factum videretur.”

² Although nothing can be more unjust than these remarks, in the unqualified form in which they are stated by Kant, it must, I think, be acknowledged, that some grounds for them have been furnished by occasional passages which dropped from the pens of most of Mr. Hume’s Scottish opponents.

for the first spark of this light. I first inquired, therefore, whether Hume's objection might not be a general one, and soon found, that the idea of cause and effect is far from being the only one, by which the understanding *à priori* thinks of the connection of things; but rather that the science of metaphysics is altogether founded upon these connections. I endeavoured to ascertain their number; and, having succeeded in this attempted, I proceeded to the examination of those general ideas, which, I was now convinced, are not, as Hume apprehended, derived from experience, but arise out of the pure understanding. This deduction, which seemed impossible to my acute predecessor, and which nobody besides him had ever conceived, although every one makes use of these ideas, without asking himself upon what their objective validity is founded; this deduction, I say, was the most difficult which could have been undertaken for the behoof of metaphysics; and what was still more embarrassing, metaphysics could not here offer me the smallest assistance, because that deduction ought first to establish the possibility of a system of metaphysics. As I had now succeeded in the explanation of Hume's problem, not merely in a particular instance, but with a view of the whole power of pure reason, I could advance with sure though tedious steps, to determine completely, and upon general principles, the compass of Pure Reason, both what is the sphere of its exertion, and what are its limits; which was all that was required for erecting a system of metaphysics upon a proper and solid foundation."

It is difficult to discover any thing in the foregoing passage on which Kant could found a claim to the slightest originality. A variety of English writers had, long before this work appeared, replied to Mr. Hume, by observing that the understanding is itself a source of new ideas, and that it is from this source that our notions of cause and effect are derived. "Our certainty (says Dr. Price) that

every new event requires some cause, depends no more on experience than our certainty of any other the most obvious subject of intuition. In the idea of every *change*, is included that of its being an *effect*.¹ In the works of Dr. Reid, many remarks of the same nature are to be found; but, instead of quoting any of these, I shall produce a passage from a much older author, whose mode of thinking and writing may perhaps be more agreeable to the taste of Kant's countrymen, than the simplicity and precision aimed at by the disciples of Locke.

“That there are some ideas of the mind (says Dr. Cudworth), which were not stamped or imprinted upon it from the sensible objects without, and therefore must needs arise from the innate vigour and activity of the mind itself, is evident, in that there are, *First*, Ideas of such things as are neither affections of bodies, nor could be imprinted or conveyed by any local motions, nor can be pictured at all by the fancy in any sensible colours; such as are the ideas of wisdom, folly, prudence, imprudence, knowledge, ignorance, verity, falsity, virtue, vice, honesty, dishonesty, justice, injustice, volition, cogitation, nay of sense itself, which is a species of cogitation, and which is not perceptible by any sense; and many other such like notions as include something of cogitation in them, or refer to cogitative beings only; which ideas must needs spring from the active power and innate fecundity of the mind itself,² because the corporeal objects of sense can imprint no such things upon it. *Secondly*, In that there are many relative notions and ideas, attributed as well to corporeal as incorporeal things, that proceed wholly from the

¹ *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, chap. i. sect. 2. The first edition of this book was printed in 1753.

² This is precisely the language of the German school: “Les vérités nécessaires (says Leibnitz) sont le produit immédiat de l’activité intérieure.” (Tome I. p. 686. Tome II. pp. 42, 325. See Degerando, *Hist. Comp.* Tome II. p. 96.)

activity of the mind comparing one thing with another. Such as are CAUSE, EFFECT, means, end, order, proportion, similitude, dissimilitude, equality, inequality, aptitude, inaptitude, symmetry, asymmetry, whole and part, genus and species, and the like.”—*Immutable Morality*, pp. 148, 149.

It is not my business at present to inquire into the solidity of the doctrine here maintained. I would only wish to be informed what additions have been made by Kant to the reply given to Mr. Hume by our English philosophers, and to direct the attention of my readers to the close resemblance between this part of Kant’s system, and the argument which Cudworth opposed to Hobbes and Gassendi considerably more than a century ago.¹

The following passage, from the writer last quoted, approaches so nearly to what Kant and other Germans have so often repeated of the distinction between *subjective* and *objective* truth, that I am tempted to connect it with the foregoing extract, as an additional proof that there are, at least, some metaphysical points, on which we need not search for instruction beyond our own island.

“If there were no other perceptive power, or faculty, distinct from external sense, all our perceptions would be merely relative, seeming, and fantastical, and not reach to the absolute and certain truth of any thing; and every one would but, as Protagoras expounds, “think his own private and relative thoughts truths,” and all our cogitations being nothing but appearances, would be indifferently alike true phantasms, and one as another.

“But we have since also demonstrated, that there is another perceptive power in the soul superior to outward sense,

¹ In the attempt, indeed, which Kant has made to enumerate all the general ideas which are not derived from experience, but arise out of the pure understanding, he may well lay claim to the praise of originality. On this subject I shall only refer my readers to Note (DD) at the end of this *Dissertation*.

and of a distinct nature from it, which is the power of knowing or understanding, that is, an active exertion from the mind itself. And, therefore, has this grand eminence above sense, that it is no idiopathy, not a mere private, relative, seeming, and fantastical thing, but the comprehension of that which absolutely is and is not."¹

After enlarging on the distinction between the sensitive faculty and the understanding, Kant proceeds to investigate certain essential conditions, without which neither the sensitive faculty nor its objects are conceivable. These conditions are *time* and *space*, which, in the language of Kant, are the *forms* of all phenomena. What his peculiar ideas are concerning their nature and attributes, my readers will find stated in his own words at the end of this Discourse, in an extract from one of his Latin publications.² From that extract, I cannot promise them much instruction; but it will at least enable them to judge for themselves of the peculiar character of Kant's metaphysical phraseology. In the mean time, it will be sufficient to mention here, for the sake of connection, that he denies the *objective* reality both of time and of space. The former he considers merely as a *subjective* condition, inseparably connected with the frame of the human mind, in consequence of which, it arranges sensible phenomena according to a certain law, in the order of succession. As to the latter, he asserts, that it is nothing *objective* or *real*, inasmuch as it is neither a substance, nor an accident, nor a relation; that its existence, therefore, is only *subjective* and *ideal*, depending on a fixed law, inseparable from the frame of the human mind. In consequence of this law, we are led to conceive all external things as placed in space; or (as Kant expresses it) we are led to consider *space as the fundamental form of every external sensation*.

¹ *Immutable Morality*, p. 264, *et seq*

² See Note (EE.)

In selecting Kant's speculations concerning *time* and *space*, as a specimen of his mode of writing, I was partly influenced by the consideration, that it furnishes, at the same time, a remarkable example of the concatenation which exists between the most remote and seemingly the most unconnected parts of his system. Who could suppose that his opinions on these subjects, the most abstract and the most controverted of any in the whole compass of metaphysics, bore on the great practical question of the freedom of the Human Will? The combination appears, at first sight, so very extraordinary, that I have no doubt I shall gratify the curiosity of some of my readers by mentioning a few of the intermediate steps which, in this argument, lead from the premises to the conclusion.

That Kant conceived the free agency of man to be necessarily implied in his moral nature (or, at least, that he was anxious to offer no violence to the common language of the world on this point,) appears from his own explicit declarations in various parts of his works. "Voluntas libera (says he in one instance) eadem est cum voluntate legibus moralibus obnoxia."¹

In all the accounts of Kant's philosophy, which have yet appeared from the pens of his admirers in this country, particular stress is laid on the ingenuity with which he has unloosed this knot, which had baffled the wisdom of all his predecessors. The following are the words of one of his own pupils, to whom we are indebted for the first, and, I think, not the least intelligible, view of his principles which has been published in our language.²

¹ See Born's Latin Translation of Kant's Works, relating to the *Critical Philosophy*, Vol. II. p. 325, *et seq.* See also the Preface to Vol. III.

² *A General and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles concerning Man, the World, and the Deity, submitted to the consideration of the Learned*, by F. A. Nitsch, late Lecturer on the Latin

“Professor Kant is decidedly of opinion, that, although many strong and ingenious arguments have been brought forward in favour of the freedom of the will, they are yet very far from being decisive. Nor have they refuted the arguments urged by the Necessitarians, but by an appeal to mere feeling, which, on such a question, is of no avail. For this purpose, it is indispensably necessary to call to our assistance the principles of Kant.”

“In treating this subject (continues the same author), Kant begins with showing that the notion of a Free Will is not contradictory. In proof of this he observes, that, although every human action, as an event in time, must have a cause, and so on *ad infinitum*; yet it is certain, that the laws of cause and effect can have a place there only where *time* is, for the effect must be consequent on the cause. But neither *time* nor *space* are properties of things; they are only the general *forms* under which man is allowed to view himself and the world. It follows, therefore, that man is not in time nor in space, although the forms of his intuitive ideas are time and space. But if man exist not in time and space, he is not influenced by the laws of time and space, among which those of cause and effect hold a distinguished rank; it is, therefore,

Language and Mathematics in the Royal Frederician College at Königsberg, and pupil of Professor Kant. London, 1796. Pp. 172, 173.

This small performance is spoken of in terms highly favourable, by the other writers who have attempted to introduce Kant's philosophy into England. It is called by Dr. Willich an *excellent publication* (*Elements of the Critical Philosophy*, p. 62); and is pronounced by the author of the elaborate articles on that subject in the *Encyclopædia Londinensis* to be a *sterling work*. “Though at present very little known, I may venture (says this writer) to predict, that, as time rolls on, and prejudices moulder away, this work, like the *Elements of Euclid*, will stand forth as a lasting monument of PURE TRUTH.”—See Note (FF.)

no contradiction to conceive, that, in such an order of things, man may be free."¹

In this manner Kant establishes the *possibility* of man's freedom; and, farther than this, he does not conceive himself warranted to proceed on the principles of the critical philosophy. The first impression, certainly, which his argument produces on the mind is, that his own opinion was favourable to the scheme of necessity. For if the reasonings of the Necessitarians be admitted to be satisfactory, and if nothing can be opposed to them but the incomprehensible proposition, that man neither exists in space nor in time, the natural inference is, that this proposition was brought forward rather to save appearances, than as a serious objection to the universality of the conclusion.

Here, however, Kant calls to his aid the principles of what he calls *practical* reason. Deeply impressed with a conviction that morality is the chief concern of man, and that morality and the freedom of the human will must stand or fall together, he exerts his ingenuity to show, that the metaphysical proof already brought of the possibility of free-agency, joined to our own consciousness of a liberty of choice, affords evidence of the fact fully sufficient for the practical regulation of our conduct, although not amounting to what is represented as demonstration in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.²

¹ Nitsch, &c. pp. 174, 175.

² The account of this part of Kant's doctrine given by M. Buhle agrees in substance with that of Mr. Nitsch: "Toute moralité des actions repose uniquement sur la disposition pratique, en tant qu'elle est déterminée par la loi morale seule. Si l'on considère cette disposition comme *phénomène* dans la conscience; c'est un événement naturel, elle obéit à la loi de la causalité, elle repose sur ce que l'homme a éprouvé auparavant dans le tems, et elle fait partie du caractère empirique de l'homme. Mais on peut aussi la considérer comme un acte de la liberté raisonnable. Alors elle n'est plus soumise à la loi de la causalité; elle est indépendante de la condition du tems, elle se rapporte à une

It is impossible to combine together these two parts of the Kantian system, without being struck with the resemblance they bear to the deceitful sense of liberty to which Lord Kames had recourse (in the *first* edition of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*), in order to reconcile our consciousness of free-agency with the conclusions of the Necessitarians. In both cases, the reader is left in a state of most uncomfortable scepticism, not confined to this particular question, but extending to every other subject which can give employment to the human faculties.¹

cause intelligible, la liberté, et elle fait partie du caractère intelligible de l'homme. On ne peut, à la vérité, point acquérir la moindre connoissance des objets intelligibles ; mais la liberté n'est pas moins un fait de la conscience. Donc les actions extérieures sont indifférentes pour la moralité de l'homme. La bonté morale de l'homme consiste uniquement dans sa volonté moralement bonne, et celle-ci consiste en ce que la volonté soit déterminée par la loi morale seule." (*Hist. de la Philosophie Moderne*, par J. G. Buhle, Tom. VI. pp. 504, 505.

Very nearly to the same purpose is the following statement by the ingenious author of the article *Leibnitz* in the *Biographie Universelle* : "Comment accorder le *fatum* et la liberté, l'imputation morale et la dépendence des êtres finies ? Kant croit échapper à cet écueil en ne soumettant à la loi de causalité (au *déterminisme* de Leibnitz) que le monde phénoménique, et en affranchissant de ce principe l'ame comme *noumène*, ou chose en soi, envisageant ainsi chaque action comme appartenant à un double série à la fois ; à l'ordre physique où elle est enchainée à ce qui précède et à ce qui suit par les liens communs de la nature, et à l'ordre morale, ou une détermination produit un effet, sans que pour expliquer cette volition et son resultat, on soit renvoyé à un état antécédent."

The author of the above passage is M. Staffer, to whom we are indebted for the article *Kant* in the same work. For Kant's own view of the subject consult his *Critique of Pure Reason*, *passim*, particularly p. 99, *et seq.* of Born's *Translation*, Vol. III.

¹ The idea of Kant (according to his own explicit avowal) was, that every being, which *conceives* itself to be free, whether it be in reality so or not, is rendered by its own belief a moral and accountable agent. "Jam equidem dico : quæque natura, quæ non potest, nisi *sub idea libertatis* agere, propter id ipsum, respectu practico, reipsa libera est ; hoc est, ad eam valent cunctæ leges,

In some respects, the functions ascribed by Kant to his *practical* reason are analogous to those ascribed to common sense in the writings of Beattie and Oswald. But his view of the subject is, on the whole, infinitely more exceptionable than theirs, inasmuch as it sanctions the supposition, that the conclusions of *pure reason* are, in certain instances, at variance with *that* modification of reason which was meant by our Maker to be our guide in life; whereas the constant language of the other writers is, that all the different parts of our intellectual frame are in the most perfect harmony with each other. The motto which Beattie has prefixed to his book,

“Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dicit,”

expresses, in a few significant words, the whole substance of his philosophy.

It is to the same *practical* modification of reason that Kant appeals in favour of the existence of the Deity, and of a future state of retribution, both of which articles of belief he thinks derive the whole of their evidence from the moral nature of man. His system, therefore, as far as I am able to comprehend it, tends rather to represent these as useful *credenda*, than as certain or even as probable truths. In-

cum libertate arctissime conjunctæ, perinde, ac voluntasejus etiam per se ipsam, et in philosophia theoretica probata, libera declaratur.” (Kantii *Opera*, Vol. II. p. 326.)

This is also the creed professed by the Abbé Galiani, a much more dangerous moralist than Kant, because he is always intelligible, and often extremely lively and amusing. “L’homme est donc libre, puisqu’il est intimement persuadé de l’être, et que cela vaut tout autant que la liberté. *Voilà donc le mécanisme de l’univers expliqué clair comme de l’eau de roche.*” The same author farther remarks, “La persuasion de la liberté constitue l’essence de l’homme. On pourroit même définir l’homme *un animal qui se croit libre*, et ce seroit une définition complète.” (*Correspondance inédite de l’Abbé Galiani*, Tome I. pp. 339, 340. A Paris, 1818.)

deed, the whole of his moral superstructure will be found to rest ultimately on no better basis than the metaphysical *co-nundrum*, that the human mind (considered as a *noumenon* and not as a *phenomenon*) neither exists in space nor in time.

That it was Kant's original aim to establish a system of scepticism, I am far from being disposed to think.¹ The probability is, that he began with a serious wish to refute the doctrines of Hume ; and that, in the progress of his inquiries, he met with obstacles of which he was not aware. It was to remove these obstacles that he had recourse to practical reason ; an idea which has every appearance of being an *afterthought*, very remote from his views when he first undertook his work. This, too, would seem, from the following passage (which I translate from Degerando), to have been the opinion of one of Kant's ablest German commentators, M. Reinhold : "*Practical Reason* (as Reinhold ingeniously observes) is a wing which Kant has prudently added to his edifice, from a sense of the inadequacy of the original design to answer the intended purpose. It bears a manifest resemblance to what some philosophers call an appeal to *sentiment*, founding belief on the necessity of acting. Whatever contempt Kant may affect for popular systems of philosophy, this manner of considering the subject is not unlike the disposition of those who, feeling their inability to obtain, by the exercise of their reason, a direct conviction of their religious creed, cling to it nevertheless with a blind

¹ On the contrary, he declares explicitly (and I give him full credit for the sincerity of his words), that he considered his *Critique of Pure Reason* as the only effectual antidote against the opposite extremes of scepticism and of superstition, as well as against various heretical doctrines which at present infect the schools of philosophy. "Hâc igitur solâ (*Philosophia Criticâ*) et materialismi, et fatâlistimi, et Atheismi, et diffidentiae profanæ, et fanaticismi, et superstitionis, quorum virus ad universos potest penetrare, tandemque etiam et idealismi, et scepticismi, qui magis scholis sunt pestiferi, radices ipsæ possunt præcidi." (Kant, *Præf. Posterior*, p. xxxv.)

eagerness, as a support essential to their morals and their happiness.” (*Hist. Comparée*, Vol. II. pp. 243, 244.)

The extraordinary impression produced for a considerable time in Germany, by the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is very shrewdly, and I suspect justly, accounted for by the writer last quoted: “The system of Kant was well adapted to flatter the weakness of the human mind. Curiosity was excited, by seeing paths opened which had never been trodden before. The love of mystery found a secret charm in the obscurity which enveloped the doctrine. The long and troublesome period of initiation was calculated to rouse the ambition of bold and adventurous spirits. Their love of singularity was gratified by the new nomenclature; while their vanity exulted in the idea of being admitted into a privileged sect, exercising, and entitled to exercise, the supreme censorship in philosophy. Even men of the most ordinary parts, on finding themselves called to so high functions, lost sight of their real mediocrity, and conceived themselves transformed into geniuses destined to form a new era in the history of reason.

“Another inevitable effect resulted from the universal change operated by Kant in his terms, in his classifications, in his methods, and in the enunciation of his problems. The intellectual powers of the greater part of the initiated were too much exhausted in the course of their long novitiate, to be qualified to judge soundly of the doctrine itself. They felt themselves, after so many windings, lost in a labyrinth, and were unable to dispense with the assistance of the guide who had conducted them so far. Others, after so great a sacrifice, wanted the courage to confess to the world, or to themselves, the disappointment they had met with. They attached themselves to the doctrine in proportion to the sacrifice they had made, and estimated its value by the la-

bour it had cost them. As for more superficial thinkers, they drew an inference from the novelty of the form in favour of the novelty of the matter, and from the novelty of the matter in favour of its importance.

“It is a great advantage for a sect to possess a distinguishing garb and livery. It was thus that the Peripatetics extended their empire so widely, and united their subjects in one common obedience. Kant had, over and above all this, the art of insisting, that his disciples should belong exclusively to himself. He explicitly announced, that he was not going to found a school of Eclectics, but a school of his own; a school not only independent, but in some measure hostile to every other; that he could admit of no compromise with any sect whatever; that he was come to overturn every thing which existed in philosophy, and to erect a new edifice on these immense ruins. The more decided and arrogant the terms were in which he announced his design, the more likely was it to succeed; for the human mind submits more easily to an unlimited than to a partial faith, and yields itself up without reserve, rather than consent to cavil about restrictions and conditions, even in favour of its own independence.”

With these causes of Kant's success another seems to have powerfully conspired; the indissoluble coherence and concatenation of all the different parts of his philosophy. “It is on this concatenation (says M. Prevost) that the admiration of Kant's followers is chiefly founded.” *Grant only (they boast) the first principles of the Critical Philosophy, and you must grant the whole system.* The passage quoted on this occasion by M. Prevost is so forcibly expressed, that I cannot do it justice in an English version: “Ab hinc enim capitibus fluere necesse est omnem philosophiæ criticæ rationis puræ vim atque virtutem; namque in ea contextus rerum prorsus mirabilis est, ita ut extrema primis, media utrisque, omnia omnibus respondeant; si prima dede-

ris danda sunt omnia.”¹ No worse account could well have been given of a philosophical work on such a subject; nor could any of its characteristical features have been pointed out more symptomatic of its ephemeral reputation. Supposing the praise to be just, it represented the system, however fair and imposing in its first aspect, as vitally and mortally vulnerable (if at all vulnerable) in every point; and, accordingly, it was fast approaching to its dissolution before the death of its author. In Germany, at present, we are told, that a pure Kantian is scarcely to be found.² But there are many Semi-Kantians and Anti-Kantians, as well as partisans of other schemes built out of the ruins of the Kantian philosophy.³ “In fine (says a late author), the *Critique of Pure Reason*, announced with pomp, received with fanaticism, disputed about with fury, after having accomplished the overthrow of the doctrines taught by Leibnitz and Wolff, could no longer support itself upon its own foundations, and has produced no permanent result, but divisions and enmities, and a general disgust at all systematical creeds.”⁴ If this last effect has really resulted from it (of which some doubts may perhaps be entertained), it may be regarded as a favoura-

¹ See some very valuable strictures on Kant, in the learned and elegant sketch of the present state of philosophy, subjoined to M. Prevost’s French translation of Mr. Smith’s posthumous works. The Latin panegyric on the critical philosophy is quoted from a work with which I am unacquainted, *Fred. Gottlob Bornii de Scientia et Conjectura*.

² On this subject, see Degerando, Tom. II. p. 333.

³ See Degerando, and de Bonald.

⁴ The words in the original are, “Un dégoût générale de toute doctrine.” But as the same word *doctrine* is, in a former part of the same sentence, applied to the systems of Leibnitz and of Wolff, I have little doubt, that, in substituting for *doctrine* the phrase *systematical creeds*, I have faithfully rendered the meaning of my author. (See *Recherches Philosophiques*, par M. de Bonald, Tom. I. pp. 43, 44.)

ble symptom of a sounder taste in matters of abstract science, than has ever yet prevailed in that country.¹

To these details, I have only to add a remark of De-gerando's, which I have found amply confirmed within the circle of my own experience. It might furnish matter for some useful reflections, but I shall leave my readers to draw their own conclusions from it. "Another remarkable circumstance is, that the defence of the Kantians turned, in general, not upon the *truth* of the disputed proposition, but upon the right interpretation of their master's meaning, and that their reply to all objections has constantly begun and ended with these words, *You have not understood us.*"

¹ The passion of the Germans for *Systems* is a striking feature in their literary taste, and is sufficient of itself to show, that they have not yet passed their noviciate in philosophy. "To all such (says Mr. Maclaurin) as have just notions of the Great Author of the universe, and of his admirable workmanship, all complete and finished systems must appear very suspicious." At the time when he wrote, such systems had not wholly lost their partisans in England; and the name of *System* continued to be a favourite title for a book even among writers of the highest reputation. Hence the *System of Moral Philosophy* by Hutcheson, and the *Complete System of Optics* by Smith, titles which, when compared with the subsequent progress of these two sciences, reflect some degree of ridicule upon their authors.

When this affectation of systematical method began, in consequence of the more enlarged views of philosophers, to give way to that aphoristical style so strongly recommended and so happily exemplified by Lord Bacon, we find some writers of the old school complaining of the innovation, in terms not unlike those in which the philosophy of the English has been censured by some German critics. "The best way (says Dr. Watts) to learn any science, is to begin with a regular system. Now (he continues), we deal much in essays, and unreasonably despise systematical learning; whereas our fathers had a just value for regularity and systems." Had Dr. Watts lived a few years later, I doubt not that his good sense would have led him to retract these hasty and inconsiderate decisions.

Among the various schools which have emanated from that of Kant, those of Fichte and Schelling seem to have attracted among their countrymen the greatest number of proselytes. Of neither am I able to speak from my own knowledge; nor can I annex any distinct idea to the accounts which are given of their opinions by others. Of Fichte's speculations about the philosophical import of the pronoun *I* (*Qu'est-ce que le moi?* as Degerando translates the question), I cannot make any thing. In some of his remarks, he approaches to the language of those Cartesians who, in the progress of their doubts, ended in absolute *egoism*: but the *ego*¹ of Fichte has a creative power. It creates *existence*, and it creates *science*; two things (by the way) which, according to him, are one and the same. Even *my own* existence, he tells me, commences only with the *reflex act*, by which I think of the pure and primitive *ego*. On this identity of the intelligent *ego* and the existing *ego* (which Fichte expresses by the formula *ego = ego*) all science ultimately rests.—But on this part of his metaphysics it would be idle to enlarge, as the author acknowledges, that it is not to be understood without the aid of a certain *transcendental sense*, the want of which is wholly irreparable; a singular admission enough (as Degerando observes), on the part of those critical philosophers who have treated with so much contempt the appeal to *Common Sense* in the writings of some of their predecessors.²

“In the history of beings there are (according to Fichte) three grand epochs; the first belongs to the empire of *chance*; the second is the reign of *nature*; the third *will be* the epoch of the existence of *God*. For God does not exist

¹In order to avoid the intolerable awkwardness of such a phrase as *the I*, I have substituted on this occasion the Latin pronoun for the English one.

²*Hist. Comparée, &c.* Tome II. pp. 300, 301. See also the article FICHTE in this *Supplement*.

yet; he only manifests himself as preparing to exist. Nature tends to an apotheosis, and may be regarded as a sort of divinity in the germ.”¹

The account given by Madame de Staël of this part of Fichte’s system is considerably different: “He was heard to say, upon one occasion, that in his next lecture he ‘was going to create God,’—an expression which, not without reason, gave general offence. His meaning was, that he intended to show how the idea of God arose and unfolded itself in the mind of man.”² How far this apology is well-founded, I am not competent to judge.

¹ *Hist Comparée*, &c. Tome II. p. 314. The doctrine here ascribed to Fichte by Degerando, although its unparalleled absurdity might well excite some doubts about the correctness of the historian, is not altogether a novelty in the history of philosophy. It is in point of fact nothing more than a return to those gross conceptions of the mind in the infancy of human reason, which Mr. Smith has so well described in the following passage: “In the first ages of the world, the seeming incoherence of the appearances of nature so confounded mankind, that they despaired of discovering in her operations any regular system. . . . Their gods, though they were apprehended to interpose upon some particular occasions, were so far from being regarded as the creators of the world, that their origin was apprehended to be posterior to that of the world. The earth (according to Hesiod) was the first production of the chaos. The heavens arose out of the earth, and from both together, all the gods who afterwards inhabited them. Nor was this notion confined to the vulgar, and to those poets who seem to have recorded the vulgar theology. . . . The same notion of the spontaneous origin of the world was embraced (as Aristotle tells us) by the early Pythagoreans. . . Mind, and Understanding, and consequently Deity, being the most perfect, were necessarily, according to them, the last productions of nature. For, in all other things, what was most perfect, they observed, always came last: As in plants and animals, it is not the seed that is most perfect, but the complete animal, with all its members in the one; and the complete plant, with all its branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits, in the other.”—Smith’s *Post. Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, pp. 106, 107.

² *De l’Allemagne*. Tome III. p. 107. Londres, 1813.

The system of Schelling is, in the opinion of Degerando, but an extension of that of Fichte; connecting with it a sort of Spinozism grafted on Idealism. In considering the primitive *ego* as the source of all reality as well as of all science, and in thus transporting the mind into an intellectual region, inaccessible to men possessed only of the ordinary number of senses, both agree; and to this vein of transcendental mysticism may probably be ascribed the extraordinary enthusiasm with which their doctrines appear to have been received by the German youth. Since the time when Degerando wrote, a new and very unexpected revolution is said to have taken place among Schelling's disciples; many of them, originally educated in the Protestant faith, having thrown themselves into the bosom of the Catholic church¹ "The union of the faithful of this school forms an invisible church, which has adopted for its symbol and watch-word, the Virgin Mary; and hence rosaries are sometimes to be seen in the hands of those who reckon Spinoza among the greatest prophets." It is added, however, with respect to this invisible church, that "its members have embraced the Catholic religion, not as the *true* religion, but as the most *poetical*;" a thing not improbable among a people who have so strong a disposition to mingle together poetry and metaphysics in the same compositions.² But it is painful to contemplate these sad

¹ See a paper by M. G. Schweighauser in the *London Monthly Magazine* for 1804, p. 207.

² "Aussi les Allemands mêlent ils trop souvent la Métaphysique à la Poésie." (*Allemagne*, Vol. III. p. 133.) "Nothing (says Mr. Hume) is more dangerous to reason than the flights of imagination, and nothing has been the occasion of more mistakes among philosophers. Men of bright fancies may, in this respect, be compared to those angels, whom the scripture represents as covering their eyes with their wings." (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 464.)

aberrations of human reason ; nor would I have dwelt on them so long as I have done, had I not been anxious to convey to my readers a general, but I trust not unfaithful, idea of the style and spirit of a philosophy, which, within the short period of our recollection, rose, flourished, and fell ; and which, in every stage of its history, furnished employment to the talents of some of the most learned and able of our contemporaries.¹

The space which I have allotted to Kant has so far exceeded what I intended he should occupy, that I must pass over the names of many of his countrymen much more worthy of public attention. In the account given by Degerando of the opponents to the Kantian system, some remarks are quoted from different writers, which convey a very favourable idea of the works from which they are borrowed. Among these I would more particularly distinguish those ascribed to Jacobi and to Reinhold. In the Memoirs, too, of the Berlin Academy, where (as Degerando justly observes) the philosophy of Locke found an asylum, while banished from the rest of Germany, there is a considerable

¹ According to a French writer, who appears to have resided many years in Germany, and who has enlivened a short Essay on the *Elements of Philosophy* with many curious historical details concerning Kant and his successors,—both Fichte and Schelling owed much of their reputation to the uncommon eloquence displayed in their academical lectures: “ Cette doctrine sortait de la bouche de Fichte, revêtu de ces ornemens qui donnent la jeunesse, la beauté et la force au discours. On ne se lassait point en l’écoutant.”

Of Schelling he expresses himself thus : “ Schelling, appelé à l’université de Wirzbourg, y attira par sa réputation un concours nombreux d’auditeurs, qu’il enchainait à ses leçons par la richesse de sa diction et par l’étendue de ses connoissances. De là, il est venu à Munich, où je le revis en 1813. On dit qu’il a embrassé la religion Catholique.” (*Essai sur les Elémens de la Philosophie*, par G. Gley, Principal au Collège d’Alençon. Paris, 1817. pp. 152, 133.)

number of metaphysical articles of the highest merit.¹ Nor must I omit to mention the contributions to this science by the university of Goettingen; more especially on questions connected with the philosophy of language. I have great pleasure, also, in acknowledging the entertainment I have received, and the lights I have borrowed from the learned labours of Meiners and of Herder; but none of these are so closely connected with the history of metaphysics as to justify me in entering into particular details with respect to them. I am ashamed to say that, in Great Britain, the only one of these names which has been much talked of, is that of Kant, a circumstance which, I trust, will apologize for the length to which the foregoing observations have extended.²

The only other country of Europe from which any contributions to metaphysical philosophy could be reasonably looked for, during the eighteenth century, is Italy; and to this particular branch of science I do not know that any Italian of much celebrity has, in these later times, turned his attention. The metaphysical works of Cardinal Gerdil (a native of Savoy) are extolled by some French writers; but none of them have ever happened to fall in my way.³

¹ In a volume of this collection (for the year 1797), which happens to be now lying before me, there are three profound and important *Memoirs on Probabilities*, by M. Prevost and M. l'Huillier. Neither of these authors, I am aware, is of German origin, but as the Academy of Berlin has had the merit to bring their papers before the public, I could not omit this opportunity of recommending them to the attention of my readers. To a very important observation made by MM. Prevost and l'Huillier, which has been the subject of some dispute, I am happy to avail myself of the same opportunity to express my unqualified assent. (See pp. 15 and 31 of the memoirs belonging to the *Classe de Philosophie Spéculative*.)

² See Note (GG.)

³ His two first publications, which were directed against the philosophy of Locke (if we may judge from their titles), are not

At a more recent period, Genovesi, a Neapolitan philosopher¹ (best known as a political economist), has attracted a good deal of notice by some metaphysical publications. Their chief object is said to be to reconcile, as far as possible, the opinions of Leibnitz with those of Locke. "Pendant que Condillac donnait inutilement des leçons à un Prince d'Italie, Genovesi en donnait avec plus de succès à ses élèves Napolitans : il combinait le mieux qu'il lui étoit possible les theories de Leibnitz, pour lequel il eut toujours une prévention favorable, avec celle de Locke, qu'il accrédita le premier en Italie."² Various other works

likely, in the present times, to excite any curiosity. 1. *The Immateriality of the Soul Demonstrated against Mr. Locke, on the same Principles on which this Philosopher has Demonstrated the Existence and the Immateriality of God.* Turin, 1747. 2. *Defence of the Opinion of Malebranche, on the Nature and Origin of our Ideas, against the Examination of Mr. Locke.* Turin, 1748. The only other works of Gerdil which I have seen referred to are, *A Dissertation on the Incompatibility of the Principles of Descartes with those of Spinoza*; and *A Refutation of some Principles maintained in the Emile of Rousseau.*

Of this last performance, Rousseau is reported to have said, "*Voilà l'unique écrit publié contre moi que j'aie trouvé digne d'être lu en entier.*" (*Nouveau Dict. Hist.* article Gerdil.) In the same article, a reference is made to a public discourse of the celebrated M. Mairan, of the Academy of Sciences, in which he pronounces the following judgment on Gerdil's metaphysical powers: "*Gerdil porte avec lui dans tous ces discours un esprit géométrique, qui manque trop souvent aux géomètres mêmes.*"

¹ Born 1712, died 1769.

² *Revue Encyclopédique, ou Analyse Raisonnée des Productions les plus Remarquables dans la Littérature, les Sciences, et les Arts.* I. Vol, 3me livraison, p. 515. Paris, Mars 1819. (The writer of the article quoted in the text is M. Sarpi, an Italian by birth, who, after having distinguished himself by various publications in his own country, has now (if I am not mistaken) fixed his residence at Paris. In his own philosophical opinions, he seems to be a follower of Condillac's school, otherwise he would scarcely have spoken so highly as he has done of the French Ideologists: "*L'Idéologie qui, d'après sa dénomination récente*

of greater or less celebrity, from Italian authors, seem to announce a growing taste in that part of Europe for these abstract researches. The names of Francisco Soave, of Biagioli, and of Mariano Gigli, are advantageously mentioned by their countrymen; but none of their works, as far as I can learn, have yet reached Scotland. Indeed, with the single exception of Boscovich, I recollect no writer on the other side of the Alps, whose metaphysical speculations have been heard of in this island. This is the more to be regretted, as the specimens he has given, both of originality and soundness in some of his abstract discussions, convey a very favourable idea of the schools in which he received his education. The authority to which he seems most inclined to lean is that of Leibnitz; but, on all important

pourrait être considérée comme spécialement due aux Français, mais qui est aussi ancienne que la philosophie, puisqu'elle a pour objet la génération des idées et l'analyse des facultés qui concourent à leur formation, n'est pas étrangère aux Italiens, comme on pourrait le croire.")

Genovesi is considered, by an historian of high reputation, as the reformer of Italian philosophy. If the execution of his *Treatise on Logic* corresponds at all to the enlightened views with which the design seems to have been conceived, it cannot fail to be a work of much practical utility. "Ma chi può veramente dirsi il riformatore dell' Italiana filosofia, chi la fece tosto conoscere, e rispettare da' pù dotti filosofi delle altre nazioni, chi seppe arricchire di nuovi pregi la logica, la metafisica, e la morale, fu il celebre Genovesi. Tuttochè molti fossero stati i filosofi che cercarono con cottili riflessioni, e giusti precetti d'ajutare la mente a pensare ed a ragionare con esattezza e verità, e Bacone, Malebranche, Loke, Wolfio, e molt' altri sembrassero avere esaurito quanto v'era da scrivere su tale arte, seppe nondimeno il Genovesi trovare nuove osservazioni, e nuovi avvertimenti da preporre, e dare una logica piu piena e compiuta, e piu utile non solo allo studio della filosofia, e generalmente ad ogni studio scientifico, ma eziandio alla condotta morale, ed alla civile società." (*Dell' Origine, de Progressi, e dello Stato attuale d'Ogni Letteratura* dell' Abate D. Giovanni Andres. Tomo XV. pp. 260, 261. Venezia, 1800.)

questions he exercises his own judgment, and often combats Leibnitz with equal freedom and success. Remarkable instances of this occur in his strictures on the principle of *the sufficient reason*, and in the limitations with which he has admitted the *law of continuity*.

The vigour, and, at the same time, the versatility of talents, displayed in the voluminous works of this extraordinary man, reflect the highest honour on the country which gave him birth, and would almost tempt one to give credit to the theory which ascribes to the genial climates of the south a beneficial influence on the intellectual frame. Italy is certainly the only part of Europe where mathematicians and metaphysicians of the highest rank have produced such poetry as has proceeded from the pens of Boscovich and Stay. It is in this rare balance of imagination and of the reasoning powers, that the perfection of the human intellect will be allowed to consist; and of this balance a far greater number of instances may be quoted from Italy (reckoning from Galileo¹ downwards), than in any other corner of the learned world.

The sciences of ethics, and of political economy, seem to be more suited to the taste of the modern Italians, than logic or metaphysics, properly so called. And in the two former branches of knowledge, they have certainly contributed much to the instruction and improvement of the eighteenth century. But on these subjects we are not yet prepared to enter.

In the New World, the state of society and of manners has not hitherto been so favourable to abstract science as to pursuits which come home directly to the business of

¹ See a most interesting account of Galileo's taste for poetry and polite literature in Ginguéné, *Histoire Littéraire d'Italie*. Tome V. pp. 331, *et seq.* à Paris, 1812.

human life. There is, however, *one* metaphysician of whom America has to boast, who, in logical acuteness and subtility, does not yield to any disputant bred in the universities of Europe. I need not say, that I allude to Jonathan Edwards. But, at the time when he wrote, the state of America was more favourable than it now is, or can for a long period be expected to be, to such inquiries as those which engaged his attention; inquiries (by the way) to which his thoughts were evidently turned, less by the impulse of speculative curiosity, than by his anxiety to defend the theological system in which he had been educated, and to which he was most conscientiously and zealously attached. The effect of this anxiety in sharpening his faculties, and in keeping his polemical vigilance constantly *on the alert*, may be traced in every step of his argument.¹

¹ While this *Dissertation* was in the press, I received a new American publication, entitled, "*Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society, held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge.*" Vol. I. (Philadelphia, 1819.) From an advertisement prefixed to this volume, it appears that, at a meeting of this learned body in 1815, it was resolved, "That a new committee be added to those already established, to be denominated the Committee of History, Moral Science, and General Literature." It is with great pleasure I observed, that one of the first objects to which the committee has directed its attention, is to investigate and ascertain, as much as possible, the structure and grammatical forms of the languages of the aboriginal nations of America. The *Report* of the corresponding secretary (M. Duponceau), dated January 1819, with respect to the progress then made in this investigation, is highly curious and interesting, and displays not only enlarged and philosophical views, but an intimate acquaintance with the philological researches of Adelung, Vater, Humboldt, and other German scholars. All this evinces an enlightened curiosity, and an extent of literary information, which could scarcely have been expected in these rising states for many years to come.

The rapid progress which the Americans have lately made in the art of writing has been remarked by various critics, and it is certainly a very important fact in the history of their lite-

In the mean time, a new and unexpected mine of intellectual wealth has been opened to the learned of Europe, in those regions of the East, which, although in all probability the cradle of civilization and science, were, till very lately, better known in the annals of commerce than of philosophy. The metaphysical and ethical remains of the Indian sages are, in a peculiar degree, interesting and instructive; inasmuch as they seem to have furnished the germs of the chief systems taught in the Grecian schools. The favourite theories, however, of the Hindoos will, all of them, be found, more or less, tinctured with those ascetic habits of abstract and mystical meditation which seem to have been, in all ages, congenial to their constitutional temperament. Of such habits, an Idealism, approaching to that of Berkeley and Malebranche, is as natural an offspring, as Materialism is of the gay and dissipated manners, which, in great and luxurious capitals, are constantly inviting the thoughts abroad.

To these remains of ancient science in the East, the attention of Europe was first called by Bernier, a most intelligent and authentic traveller, of whom I formerly took no-

rature. Their state papers were, indeed, always distinguished by a strain of animated and vigorous eloquence; but as most of them were composed on the spur of the occasion, their authors had little time to bestow on the niceties, or even upon the purity of diction. An attention to these is the slow offspring of learned leisure, and of the diligent study of the best models. This I presume was Gray's meaning, when he said that "good writing not only required great parts, but the very best of those parts;"* a maxim which, if true, would point out the state of the public taste with respect to style, as the surest test among any people of the general improvement which their intellectual powers have received; and which, when applied to our Trans-atlantic brethren, would justify sanguine expectations of the attainments of the rising generation.

* Note of Mason on a Letter of Gray's to Dr. Wharton on the death of Dr. Middleton.

tice as a favourite pupil of Gassendi. But it is chiefly by our own countrymen that the field which he opened has been subsequently explored; and of their meritorious labours in the prosecution of this task, during the reign of our late Sovereign, it is scarcely possible to form too high an estimate.

Much more, however, may be yet expected, if such a prodigy as Sir William Jones should again appear, uniting, in as miraculous a degree, the gift of tongues with the spirit of philosophy. The structure of the Sanscrit, in itself, independently of the treasures locked up in it, affords one of the most puzzling subjects of inquiry that was ever presented to human ingenuity. The affinities and filiations of different tongues, as evinced in their corresponding roots and other coincidences, are abundantly curious, but incomparably more easy in the explanation, than the systematical analogy which is said to exist between the Sanscrit and the Greek (and also between the Sanscrit and the Latin, which is considered as the most ancient dialect of the Greek), in the conjugations and flexions of their verbs, and in many other particulars of their mechanism; an analogy which is represented as so complete, that, in the versions which have been made from the one language into the other, "Sancrit," we are told, "answers to Greek, as face to face in a glass."¹ That the Sanscrit did not grow up to the perfection which it now exhibits, from popular and casual modes of speech, the unexampled regularity of its forms seems almost to demonstrate; and yet, should this supposition be rejected, to what other hypothesis shall we have recourse, which does not involve equal, if not greater improbabilities? The problem is well worthy of

¹ Letter from the Reverend David Brown, Provost of the College of Fort-William, about the *Sanscrit Edition of the Gospels* (dated Calcutta, September 1806, and published in some of the *Literary Journals* of the day.)

the attention of philosophical grammarians; and the solution of it, whatever it may be, can scarcely fail to throw some new lights on the history of the human race, as well as on that of the human mind.

SECTION VIII.

METAPHYSICAL PHILOSOPHY OF SCOTLAND.

IT now only remains for me to take a slight survey of the rise and progress of the Metaphysical Philosophy of Scotland; and if, in treating of this, I should be somewhat more minute than in the former parts of this Historical Sketch, I flatter myself that allowances will be made for my anxiety to supply some chasms in the literary history of my country, which could not be so easily, nor perhaps so authentically, filled up by a younger hand.

The Metaphysical Philosophy of Scotland, and, indeed, the literary taste in general, which so remarkably distinguished this country during the last century, may be dated from the lectures of Dr. Francis Hutcheson, in the University of Glasgow. Strong indications of the same speculative spirit may be traced in earlier writers;¹ but it was from this period that Scotland, after a long slumber, began again to attract general notice in the republic of letters.²

¹ See Note (HH.)

² An Italian writer of some note, in a work published in 1763, assigns the same date to the revival of letters in Scotland. "Fra

The writings of Dr. Hutcheson, however, are more closely connected with the history of Ethical than of Metaphysical Science; and I shall, accordingly, delay any remarks which I have to offer upon them till I enter upon that part of my subject. There are, indeed, some very original and important metaphysical hints scattered over his works; but it is chiefly as an ethical writer that he is known to the

i tanti, e si chiari Scrittori che fiorirono nella Gran Bretagna a' tempi della Regina Anna, non se ne conta pur uno, che sia uscito di Scozia . . . Francesco Hutcheson venuto in Iscozia, a professarvi la Filosofia, e gli studii di umanità, nella Università di Glasgow, v'insinuò per tutto il paese colle istruzioni a viva voce, e con egregie opere date alle stampe, un vivo genio per gli studii filosofici, e literarii, e sparse quì fecondissimi semi, d'onde vediamo nascere sì felice frutti, e sì copiose." (*Discorso sopra le Vicende della Letteratura, del Sig. Carlo Denina, p. 224, Glasgow edit. 1763.*)

I was somewhat surprised to meet with the foregoing observations in the work of a foreigner, but, wherever he acquired his information, it evinces, in those from whom it was derived, a more intimate acquaintance with the traditionary history of letters in this country than has fallen to the share of most of our own authors who have treated of that subject. I have heard it conjectured, that the materials of his section on Scottish literature had been communicated to him by Mr Hume.

Another foreign writer, much better qualified than Denina to appreciate the merits of Hutcheson, has expressed himself upon this subject with his usual precision. "L'école Ecossaise a en quelque sorte pour fondateur Hutcheson maître et prédécesseur de Smith. C'est ce philosophe qui lui a imprimé son caractère, et qui a commencé à lui donner de l'éclat." In a note upon this passage, the author observes,—“C'est en ce seul sens qu'on peut donner un chef à une école de philosophie qui, comme on le verra, professe d'ailleurs la plus parfait indépendance de l'autorité.”—(See the excellent reflections upon the posthumous works of Adam Smith, annexed by M. Prevost to his translation of that work.)

Dr. Hutcheson's first course of lectures at Glasgow was given in 1730. He was a native of Ireland, and is accordingly called by Denina “un dotto Irlandese;” but he was of Scotch extraction (his father or grandfather having been a younger son of a respectable family in Ayrshire,) and he was sent over when very young to receive his education in Scotland.

world, and that he is entitled to a place among the philosophers of the eighteenth century.¹

Among the contemporaries of Dr. Hutcheson, there was one Scottish metaphysician (Andrew Baxter, author of the *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*), whose name it would be improper to pass over without some notice, after the splendid eulogy bestowed on his work by Warburton. "He who would see the justest and precisest notions of God and the soul, may read this book, one of the most finished of the kind, in my humble opinion, that the present times, greatly advanced in true philosophy, have produced."²

To this unqualified praise, I must confess, I do not think Baxter's *Inquiry* altogether entitled, although I readily acknowledge that it displays considerable ingenuity, as well as learning. Some of the remarks on Berkeley's argument

¹ One of the chief objects of Hutcheson's writings was to oppose the licentious system of Mandeville; a system which was the natural offspring of some of Locke's reasonings against the existence of innate practical principles.

As a moralist, Hutcheson was a warm admirer of the ancients, and seems to have been particularly smitten with that favourite doctrine of the Socratic school which identifies the *good* with the *beautiful*. Hence he was led to follow much too closely the example of Shaftesbury, in considering moral distinctions as founded more on sentiment than on reason, and to speak vaguely of virtue as a sort of *noble enthusiasm*; but he was led, at the same time, to connect with his ethical speculations some collateral inquiries concerning Beauty and Harmony, in which he pursued, with considerable success, the path recently struck out by Addison in his *Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination*. These inquiries of Hutcheson, together with his *Thoughts on Laughter*, although they may not be very highly prized for their depth, bear everywhere the marks of an enlarged and cultivated mind, and, whatever may have been their effects elsewhere, certainly contributed powerfully, in our Northern seats of learning, to introduce a taste for more liberal and elegant pursuits than could have been expected so soon to succeed to the intolerance, bigotry, and barbarism of the preceding century.

² See Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated*, p. 395 of the first edition.

against the existence of matter are acute and just, and, at the time when they were published, had the merit of novelty.

One of his distinguishing doctrines is, that the Deity is the *immediate* agent in producing the phenomena of the *Material World*; but that, in the *Moral World*, the case is different,—a doctrine which, whatever may be thought of it in other respects, is undoubtedly a great improvement on that of Malebranche, which, by representing God as the only agent in the universe, was not less inconsistent than the scheme of Spinoza, with the moral nature of Man. “The Deity (says Baxter) is not only at the head of Nature, but in every part of it. A chain of material causes betwixt the Deity and the effect produced, and much more a series of them, is such a supposition as would conceal the Deity from the knowledge of mortals for ever. We might search for matter above matter, till we were lost in a labyrinth out of which no philosopher ever yet found his way.—This way of bringing in second causes is borrowed from the government of the moral world, where free agents act a part; but it is very improperly applied to the material universe, where matter and motion only (or mechanism, as it is called) comes in competition with the Deity.”¹

Notwithstanding, however, these and other merits, Baxter has contributed so little to the advancement of that philosophy which has since been cultivated in Scotland, that I am afraid the very slight notice I have now taken of him may be considered as an unseasonable digression. The great object of his studies plainly was, to strengthen the old argument for the soul’s immateriality, by the new lights furnished by Newton’s discoveries. To the intellectual and moral phenomena of Man, and to the laws by which they are regulated, he seems to have paid but little attention.²

¹ Appendix to the first part of the *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, pp. 109, 110.

² Baxter was born at Old Aberdeen, in 1686, or 1687, and died at Whittingham, in East Lothian, in 1750. I have not been able

While Dr. Hutcheson's reputation as an author, and still more as an eloquent teacher, was at its zenith in Scotland, Mr. Hume began his literary career, by the publication of his *Treatise of Human Nature*. It appeared in 1739, but seems at that time to have attracted little or no attention from the public. According to the author himself, "never literary attempt was more unfortunate. It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." It forms, however, a very important link in this Historical Sketch, as it has contributed, either directly or indirectly, more than any other single work, to the subsequent progress of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. In order to adapt his principles better to the public taste, the author afterwards threw them into the more popular form of *Essays*; but it is in the original work that philosophical readers will always study his system, and it is there alone that the relations and bearings of its different parts, as well as its connection with the speculations of his immediate predecessors, can be distinctly traced. It is there, too, that his metaphysical talents appear, in my opinion, to the greatest advantage; nor am I certain that he has anywhere else displayed more skill or a sounder taste in point of composition.¹

to discover the date of the first edition of his *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, but the second edition appeared in 1737, two years before the publication of Mr. Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*.

¹ A gentleman, who lived in habits of great intimacy with Dr. Reid towards the close of his life, and on whose accuracy I can fully depend, remembers to have heard him say repeatedly, that "Mr. Hume, in his *Essays*, appeared to have forgotten his *Metaphysics*." Nor will this supposition be thought improbable, if, in addition to the subtle and fugitive nature of the subjects canvassed in the *Treatise of Human Nature*, it be considered that long before the publication of his *Essays*, Mr. Hume had abandoned all his metaphysical researches. In proof of this, I shall quote a passage from a letter of his to Sir Gilbert Elliot, which,

The great objects of Mr. Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* will be best explained in his own words.

though without a date, seems from its contents to have been written about 1750 or 1751. The passage is interesting on another account, as it serves to show how much Mr. Hume undervalued the utility of mathematical learning, and consequently how little he was aware of its importance, as an organ of physical discovery, and as the foundation of some of the most necessary arts of civilized life. "I am sorry that our correspondence should lead us into these abstract speculations. I have thought, and read, and composed very little on such questions of late. Morals, politics, and literature, have employed all my time; but still the other topics I must think more curious, important, entertaining, and useful, than any geometry that is deeper than Euclid."

I have said that it is in Mr. Hume's earliest work that his metaphysical talents appear, in my opinion, to the greatest advantage. From the following advertisement, however, prefixed in the latest editions of his works to the second volume of his *Essays and Treatises*, Mr. Hume himself would appear to have thought differently. "Most of the principles and reasonings, contained in this volume were published in a work in three volumes, called *A Treatise of Human Nature*; a work which the author had projected before he left College, and which he wrote and published not long after. But not finding it successful, he was sensible of his error in going to the press too early, and he cast the whole anew in the following pieces, where some negligencies in his former reasoning, and some in the expression, are, he hopes, corrected. Yet several writers, who have honoured the author's philosophy with answers, have taken care to direct all their batteries against that juvenile work, which the author never acknowledged, and have affected to triumph in any advantage which they imagined they had obtained over it; a practice very contrary to all rules of candour and fair dealing, and a strong instance of those polemical artifices which a bigoted zeal thinks itself authorized to employ. Henceforth, the author desires, that the following pieces may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles."

After this declaration, it certainly would be highly uncandid to impute to Mr. Hume any philosophical sentiments or principles not to be found in his *Philosophical Essays*, as well as in his *Treatise*. But where is the unfairness of replying to any plausible arguments in the latter work, even although Mr. Hume may have omitted them in his subsequent publications; more

“’Tis evident that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature, and that, however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of Man, since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties If, therefore, the sciences of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, have such a dependence on the knowledge of man, what may be expected in the other sciences, whose connection with human nature is more close and intimate? The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas : Morals and criticism regard our tastes and sentiments, and politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. Here, then, is the only expedient

especially where these arguments supply any useful lights for illustrating his more popular compositions? The *Treatise of Human Nature* will certainly be remembered as long as any of Mr. Hume’s philosophical writings ; nor is any person qualified either to approve or to reject his doctrines, who has not studied them in the systematical form in which they were originally cast. That Mr. Hume’s remonstrance may be just with respect to some of his adversaries, I believe to be true ; but it is surely expressed in a tone more querulous and peevish than is justified by the occasion.

I shall take this opportunity of preserving another judgment of Mr. Hume’s (still more fully stated) on the merits of this juvenile work. I copy it from a private letter written by himself to Sir Gilbert Elliot, soon after the publication of his *Philosophical Essays*.

“I believe the *Philosophical Essays* contain every thing of consequence relating to the Understanding, which you would meet with in the *Treatise* ; and I give you my advice against reading the latter. By shortening and simplifying the questions I really render them more complete. *Addo dum minuo*. The philosophical principles are the same in both ; but I was carried away by the heat of youth and invention to publish too precipitately. So vast an undertaking, planned before I was one and twenty, and composed before twenty-five, must necessarily be very defective. I have repented my haste a hundred and a hundred times.”

from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to leave the tedious lingering method which we have hitherto followed, and, instead of taking now and then a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or centre of these sciences, to human nature itself; which, being once masters of, we may everywhere else hope for an easy victory. From this station we may extend our conquests over all those sciences which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure to discover more fully those which are the objects of pure curiosity. There is no question of importance whose decision is not comprised in the Science of Man, and there is none which can be decided with any certainty before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending, therefore, to explain the principles of Human Nature, we, in effect, propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.

“And, as the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation. 'Tis no astonishing reflection to consider, that the application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects should come after that to natural, at the distance of above a whole century; since we find, in fact, that there was about the same interval betwixt the origin of these sciences; and that, reckoning from Thales to Socrates, the space of time is nearly equal to that betwixt my Lord Bacon and some late philosophers in England,¹ who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing, and have engaged the attention, and excited the curiosity of the public.”

I am far from thinking, that the execution of Mr. Hume's work corresponded with the magnificent design sketched out

¹ “Mr. Locke, Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Mandeville, Mr. Hutcheson, Dr. Butler,” &c.

in these observations; nor does it appear to me that he had formed to himself a very correct idea of the manner in which the experimental mode of reasoning ought to be applied to moral subjects. He had, however, very great merit in separating entirely his speculations concerning the philosophy of the mind from all physiological hypotheses about the nature of the union between soul and body; and although, from some of his casual expressions, it may be suspected that he conceived our intellectual operations to result from bodily organization,¹ he had yet much too large a share of good sense and sagacity to suppose, that, by studying the latter, it is possible for human ingenuity to throw any light upon the former. His works, accordingly, are perfectly free from those gratuitous and wild conjectures, which a few years afterwards were given to the world with so much confidence by Hartley and Bonnet. And in this respect his example has been of infinite use to his successors in this northern part of the island. Many absurd theories have, indeed, at different times been produced by our countrymen; but I know of no part of Europe where such systems as those of Hartley and Bonnet have been so uniformly treated with the contempt they deserve as in Scotland.²

Nor was it in this respect alone, that Mr. Hume's juvenile speculations contributed to forward the progress of our national literature. Among the many very exceptionable doctrines involved in them, there are various discussions, equally refin-

¹ The only expression in his works I can recollect at present, that can give any reasonable countenance to such a suspicion, occurs in his *Posthumous Dialogues*, where he speaks of "that little agitation of the brain which we call thought." (2d Edition, pp. 60, 61.) But no fair inference can be drawn from this, as the expression is put into the mouth of Philo the Sceptic; whereas the author intimates that Cleanthes speaks his own sentiments.

² In no part of Mr. Hume's metaphysical writings is there the slightest reference to either of these systems, although he survived the date of their publication little less than thirty years.

ed and solid, in which he has happily exemplified the application of metaphysical analysis to questions connected with taste, with the philosophy of jurisprudence, and with the theory of government. Of these discussions some afterwards appeared in a more popular form in his philosophical and literary Essays, and still retain a place in the latest editions of his works ; but others, not less curious, have been suppressed by the author, probably from an idea, that they were too abstruse to interest the curiosity or ordinary readers. In some of these practical applications of metaphysical principles, we may perceive the germs of several inquiries which have since been successfully prosecuted by Mr. Hume's countrymen ; and, among others, of those which gave birth to Lord Kames's *Historical Law Tracts*, and to his *Elements of Criticism*.

The publication of Mr. Hume's *Treatise* was attended with another important effect in Scotland. He had cultivated the art of writing with much greater success than any of his predecessors, and had formed his taste on the best models of English composition. The influence of his example appears to have been great and general ; and was in no instance more remarkable than in the style of his principal antagonists, all of whom, in studying his system, have caught, in no inconsiderable degree, the purity, polish, and precision of his diction. Nobody, I believe, will deny, that Locke himself, considered as an English writer, is far surpassed, not only by Hume, but by Reid, Campbell, Gerard, and Beattie ; and of this fact it will not be easy to find a more satisfactory explanation, than in the critical eye with which they were led to canvass a work, equally distinguished by the depth of its reasonings, and by the attractive form in which they are exhibited.

The fundamental principles from which Mr. Hume sets out, differ more in words than in substance from those of his immediate predecessors. According to him, all the objects

of our knowledge are divided into two classes, *impressions* and *ideas* : the former, comprehending our *sensations*, properly so called, and also our *perceptions* of sensible qualities (two things betwixt which Mr. Hume's system does not lead him to make any distinction); the latter, the objects of our thoughts when we *remember* or *imagine*, or in general exercise any of our intellectual powers on things which are past, absent, or future. These ideas he considers as *copies* of our *impressions*, and the words which denote them as the only *signs* entitled to the attention of a philosopher; every word professing to denote an idea, of which the corresponding impressions cannot be pointed out, being *ipso facto* unmeaning and illusory. The obvious result of these principles is, that what Mr. Hume calls *impressions*, furnish, either immediately or mediately, the whole materials about which our thoughts can be employed; a conclusion coinciding exactly with the account of the origin of our ideas borrowed by Gassendi from the ancient Epicureans.

With this fundamental principle of the Gassendists, Mr. Hume combined the logical method recommended by their great antagonists the Cartesians, and (what seemed still more remote from his Epicurean starting ground) a strong leaning to the idealism of Malebranche and of Berkeley. Like Descartes, he began with doubting of every thing, but he was too quick-sighted to be satisfied, like Descartes, with the solutions given by that philosopher of his doubts. On the contrary, he exposes the futility not only of the solutions proposed by Descartes himself, but of those suggested by Locke and others among his successors; ending at last where Descartes began, in considering no one proposition as more certain, or even as more probable than another. That the proofs alleged by Descartes of the existence of the material world are quite inconclusive, had been already remarked by many. Nay, it had been shown by Berkeley and others, that if the principles be admitted on which Des-

cartes, in common with all philosophers, from Aristotle downwards, proceeded, the existence of the material world is impossible. A few bold thinkers, distinguished by the name of Egoists, had gone still farther than this, and had pushed their scepticism to such a length, as to doubt of every thing but their own existence. According to *these*, the proposition, *cogito, ergo sum*, is the only truth which can be regarded as absolutely certain. It was reserved for Mr. Hume to call in question even this proposition, and to admit only the existence of *impressions* and *ideas*. To dispute against the existence of these he conceived to be impossible, inasmuch as they are the immediate subjects of consciousness. But to admit the existence of the thinking and percipient *I*, was to admit the existence of that imaginary substance called *Mind*, which (according to him) is no more an object of human knowledge, than the imaginary and exploded substance called *Matter*.

From what has been already said, it may be seen, that we are not to look in Mr. Hume's *Treatise* for any regular or connected system. It is neither a scheme of Materialism, nor a scheme of Spiritualism ; for his reasonings strike equally at the root of both these theories. His aim is to establish a universal scepticism, and to produce in the reader a complete distrust in his own faculties. For this purpose he avails himself of the data assumed by the most opposite sects, shifting his ground skilfully from one position to another, as best suits the scope of his present argument. With the single exception of Bayle, he has carried this sceptical mode of reasoning farther than any other modern philosopher. Cicero, who himself belonged nominally to the same school, seems to have thought, that the controversial habits imposed on the Academical sect by their profession of universal doubt, required a greater versatility of talent and fertility of invention, than were necessary for defending any

particular system of tenets;¹ and it is not improbable, that Mr. Hume, in the pride of youthful genius, was misled by this specious but very fallacious idea. On the other hand, Bayle has the candour to acknowledge, that nothing is so easy as to dispute after the manner of the sceptics;² and to this proposition every man of reflection will find himself more and more disposed to assent, as he advances in life. It is experience alone that can convince us, how much more difficult it is to make any real progress in the search after truth, than to acquire a talent for plausible disputation.³

¹ “Nam si singulas disciplinas percipere magnum est, quanto majus omnes? quod facere iis necesse est, quibus propositum est, veri reperiendi causa, et contra omnes philosophos et pro omnibus dicere.—Cujus rei tantæ tamque difficilis facultatem consecutum esse me non profiteor: Secutum esse præ me fero.”—*Cicero de Nat. Deor.* l. i. v.

² See the passage quoted from Bayle, in p. 135 of this *Dissertation*.

³ In the very interesting account, given by Dr. Holland, of Velara, a modern Greek physician, whom he met with at Larissa in Thessaly, a few slight particulars are mentioned, which let us completely into the character of that ingenious person. “It appeared (says Dr. Holland) that Velara had thought much on the various topics of Metaphysics and Morals, and his conversation on these topics bore the same tone of satirical scepticism which was apparent as the general feature of his opinions. We spoke of the questions of Materialism and Necessity, on both of which he declared an affirmative opinion.”—(Holland’s *Travels in the Ionian Isles*, &c. p. 275.) “I passed this evening with Velara at his own house, and sat with him till a late hour. During part of the time our conversation turned upon metaphysical topics, and chiefly on the old Pyrrhonic doctrine of the non-existence of Matter. Velara, as usual, took the sceptical side of the argument, in which he showed much ingenuity and great knowledge of the more eminent controversialists on this and other collateral subjects.” (*Ibid.* p. 370.) We see here a lively picture of a character daily to be met with in more polished and learned societies, disputing not for truth but for victory; in the first conversation professing himself a Materialist; and in the second denying the existence of Matter; on both occasions, taking up that ground where he was most likely to provoke opposition. If any inference is to be drawn from the con-

That this spirit of sceptical argument has been carried to a most pernicious excess in modern Europe, as well as among the ancient Academics, will, I presume, be now very generally allowed; but in the form in which it appears in Mr. Hume's *Treatise*, its mischievous tendency has been more than compensated by the importance of those results for which it has prepared the way. The principles which he assumes were sanctioned in common by Gassendi, by Descartes, and by Locke; and from these, in most instances, he reasons with great logical accuracy and force. The conclusions to which he is thus led are often so extravagant and dangerous, that he ought to have regarded them as a proof of the unsoundness of his data; but if he had not the merit of drawing this inference himself, he at least forced it so irresistibly on the observation of his successors, as to be entitled to share with them in the honour of their discoveries. Perhaps, indeed, it may be questioned if the errors which he adopted from his predecessors would not have kept their ground till this day, had not his sagacity displayed so clearly the consequences which they necessarily involve. It is in this sense that we must understand a compliment paid to him by the ablest of his adversaries, when he says, that "Mr. Hume's premises often do more than atone for his conclusions."¹

versation of such an individual, with respect to his real creed, it is in favour of those opinions which he controverts. These opinions, at least, we may confidently conclude to be agreeable to the general belief of the country where he lives.

¹ Mr. Hume himself (to whom Dr. Reid's *Inquiry* was communicated previous to its publication by their common friend Dr. Blair) seems not to have been dissatisfied with this apology for some of his speculations. "I shall only say (he observes in a letter addressed to the author), that if you have been able to clear up these abstruse and important subjects, instead of being mortified, I shall be so vain as to pretend to a share of the praise, and shall think that my errors, by having at least some

The bias of Mr. Hume's mind to scepticism seems to have been much encouraged, and the success of his sceptical theories in the same proportion promoted, by the recent attempts of Descartes and his followers to demonstrate Self-evident Truths,—attempts which Mr. Hume clearly perceived to involve, in every instance, that sort of paralogism which logicians call *reasoning in a circle*. The weakness of these pretended demonstrations is triumphantly exposed in the *Treatise of Human Nature*; and it is not very wonderful that the author, in the first enthusiasm of his victory over his immediate predecessors, should have fancied that the inconclusiveness of the proofs argued some unsoundness in the propositions which they were employed to support. It would, indeed, have done still greater honour to his sagacity if he had ascribed this to its true cause—the impossibility of confirming, by a process of reasoning, the *fundamental laws of Human belief*; but (as Bacon remarks) it does not often happen to those who labour in the field of science, that the same person who sows the seed should reap the harvest.

From that strong sceptical bias which led this most acute reasoner, on many important questions, to shift his controversial ground according to the humour of the moment, one favourable consequence has resulted—that we are indebted to him for the most powerful antidotes we possess against some of the most poisonous errors of modern philosophy. I have already made a similar remark in speaking of the elaborate refutation of Spinozism by Bayle; but the argument stated by Hume, in his *Essay on the Idea of Necessary Connection* (though brought forward by the author with

coherence, had led you to make a more strict review of my principles, which were the common ones, and to perceive their futility.”—(For the whole of Mr. Hume's letter, see *Biographical Memoirs* of Smith, Robertson, and Reid, by the author of this Dissertation, p. 417.)

a very different view), forms a still more valuable accession to metaphysical science, as it lays the axe to the very root from which Spinozism springs. The cardinal principle on which the whole of that system turns is, that all events, physical and moral, are *necessarily* linked together as causes and effects; from which principle all the most alarming conclusions adopted by Spinoza follow as unavoidable and manifest corollaries. But, if it be true, as Mr. Hume contends, and as most philosophers now admit, that physical causes and effects are known to us merely as *antecedents* and *consequents*; still more, if it be true that the word *necessity*, as employed in this discussion, is altogether unmeaning and insignificant, the whole system of Spinoza is nothing better than a rope of sand, and the very proposition which it professes to demonstrate is incomprehensible by our faculties. Mr. Hume's doctrine, in the unqualified form in which he states it, may lead to other consequences not less dangerous; but, if he had not the good fortune to conduct metaphysicians to the truth, he may at least be allowed the merit of having shut up for ever one of the most frequented and fatal paths which led them astray.

In what I have now said, I have supposed my readers to possess that general acquaintance with Mr. Hume's *Theory of Causation* which all well-educated persons may be presumed to have acquired. But the close connection of this part of his work with some of the historical details which are immediately to follow, makes it necessary for me, before I proceed farther, to recapitulate a little more particularly some of his most important conclusions.

It was, as far as I know, first shown in a satisfactory manner by Mr. Hume, that "every demonstration which has been produced for the necessity of a cause to every new existence is fallacious and sophistical."¹ In illustration of this

¹ *Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 144.—Although Mr. Hume, however, succeeded better than any of his predecessors,

assertion, he examines three different arguments which have been alleged as proofs of the proposition in question; the first by Mr. Hobbes; the second by Dr. Clarke; and the third by Mr. Locke. And I think it will now be readily acknowledged by every competent judge, that his objections to all these pretended demonstrations are conclusive and unanswerable.

When Mr. Hume, however, attempts to show that the proposition in question is not *intuitively* certain, his argument appears to me to amount to nothing more than a logical quibble. Of this one would almost imagine that he was not insensible himself, from the short and slight manner in which he hurries over the discussion. "All certainty (he observes) arises from the comparison of ideas, and from the discovery of such relations as are unalterable, so long as the ideas continue the same. These relations are *resemblance, proportions in quantity and number, degrees of any quality, and contrariety*; none of which are implied in this proposition, *whatever has a beginning has also a cause of existence*. That proposition, therefore, is not intuitively certain. At least, any one who would assert it to be intuitively certain, must deny these to be the only infallible relations, and must find some other relation of that

in calling the attention of philosophers to this discussion, his opinion on the subject does not possess the merit, in point of originality, which was supposed to belong to it either by himself or by his antagonists. See the passages which I have quoted in proof of this, in the first volume of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, p. 542, *et seq.* fourth edit. and also in the second volume of the same work, p. 556, *et seq.* second edit. Among these, I request the attention of my readers more particularly to a passage from a book entitled, *The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of the Human Understanding*, published two years before the *Treatise of Human Nature*, and commonly ascribed to Dr. Browne, Bishop of Cork. The coincidence is truly wonderful, as it can scarcely, by any possibility, be supposed that this book was ever heard of by Mr. Hume.

kind to be implied in it, which it will be then time enough to examine."

Upon this passage, it is sufficient for me to observe, that the whole force of the reasoning hinges on two assumptions, which are not only gratuitous, but false. 1st, That all certainty arises from the comparison of ideas. 2dly, That *all* the unalterable relations among our ideas are comprehended in his own arbitrary enumeration; *Resemblance, proportions in quantity and numbers, degrees of any quality, and contrariety*. When the correctness of these two premises shall be fully established, it will be time enough (to borrow Mr. Hume's own words) to examine the justness of his conclusion.

From this last reasoning, however, of Mr. Hume, it may be suspected, that he was aware of the vulnerable point against which his adversaries were most likely to direct their attacks. From the weakness, too, of the entrenchments which he has here thrown up for his own security, he seems to have been sensible, that it was not capable of a long or vigorous resistance. In the mean time, he betrays no want of confidence in his original position; but repeating his assertion, that "we derive the opinion of the necessity of a cause to every new production, neither from demonstration nor from intuition," he boldly concludes, that "this opinion must necessarily arise from observation and experience." (Vol. I. p. 147.) Or, as he elsewhere expresses himself; "All our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom; and, consequently, belief is more properly an act of the *sensitive* than of the *cogitative* part of our natures." (*Ibid.* p. 321.)

The distinction here alluded to between the *sensitive* and the *cogitative* parts of our nature (it may be proper to remind my readers) makes a great figure in the works of Cudworth and of Kant. By the former it was avowedly

borrowed from the philosophy of Plato. To the latter, it is not improbable, that it may have been suggested by this passage in Hume. Without disputing its justness or its importance, I may be permitted to express my doubts of the propriety of stating, so strongly as has frequently been done, the one of these parts of our nature in contrast with the other. Would it not be more philosophical, as well as more pleasing, to contemplate the beautiful harmony between them; and the gradual steps by which the mind is trained by the intimations of the former, for the deliberate conclusions of the latter? If, for example, our conviction of the permanence of the laws of nature be not founded on any process of reasoning (a proposition which Mr. Hume seems to have established with demonstrative evidence), but be either the result of an instinctive principle of belief, or of the association of ideas, operating at a period when the light of reason has not yet dawned, what can be more delightful than to find this suggestion of our *sensitive frame*,¹ verified by every step which our reason afterwards makes in the study of physical science; and confirmed with mathematical accuracy by the neverfailing accordance of the phenomena of the heavens with the previous calculations of astronomers! Does not this afford a satisfaction to the mind, similar to what it experiences, when we consider the adaptation of the instinct of suction, and of the organs of respiration, to the physical properties of the atmosphere? So far from encouraging scepticism, such a view of human nature seems peculiarly calculated to silence every doubt about the veracity of our faculties.²

¹ Upon either of these suppositions, Mr. Hume would, with equal propriety, have referred our anticipation of the future event to the *sensitive part of our nature*; and, in point of fact, the one supposition would have answered his purpose as well as the other.

² It is but justice to Mr. Hume to remark, that, in his later publications, he has himself suggested this very idea as the best

It is not my business at present to inquire into the soundness of Mr. Hume's doctrines on this subject. The rashness

solution he could give of his own doubts. The following passage, which appears to me to be eminently philosophical and beautiful, I beg leave to recommend to the particular attention of Kant's disciples :

"Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas ; and though the powers and forces by which the former is governed be wholly unknown to us, yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature. Custom is that principle by which this correspondence has been effected ; so necessary to the subsistence of our species, and the regulation of our conduct in every circumstance and occurrence of human life. Had not the presence of an object instantly excited the idea of those objects commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses ; and we should never have been able to adjust means to ends, or employ our natural powers, either to the producing of good, or avoiding of evil. Those who delight in the discovery and contemplation of *final causes* have here ample subject to employ their wonder and admiration.

"I shall add, for a further confirmation of the foregoing theory, that, as this operation of the mind, by which we infer like effects from like causes, and *vice versa*, is so essential to the subsistence of all human creatures, it is not probable that it could be trusted to the fallacious deductions of our reason, which is slow in its operations, appears not in any degree, during the first years of infancy ; and at best is, in every age and period of human life, extremely liable to error and mistake. It is more conformable to the ORDINARY WISDOM OF NATURE to secure so necessary an act of the mind by some instinct or mechanical tendency which may be infallible in its operations, may discover itself at the first appearance of life and thought, and may be independent of all the laboured deductions of the understanding. As nature has taught us the use of our limbs, without giving us the knowledge of the muscles and nerves by which they are actuated, so has she implanted in us an instinct which carries forward the thoughts in a correspondent course to that which she has established among external objects ; though we are ignorant of those powers and forces on which this regular course and succession of objects totally depends." (See, in the last editions of Mr. Hume's *Philosophical Essays*, published during his own lifetime, the two sections entitled *Sceptical Doubts concerning the Operations of the*

of some of them has, in my opinion, been sufficiently shown by more than one of his antagonists. I wish only to remark the important step which he made, in exposing the futility of the reasonings by which Hobbes, Clarke, and Locke, had attempted to demonstate the metaphysical axiom, that "every thing which begins to exist must have a cause;" and the essential service which he rendered to true philosophy, by thus pointing out indirectly to his successors, the only solid ground on which that principle is to be defended. It is to this argument of Hume's, according to Kant's own acknowledgment, that we owe the *Critique of Pure Reason*; and to this we are also indebted for the far more luminous refutations of scepticism by Mr. Hume's own countrymen.

In the course of Mr. Hume's very refined discussions on this subject, he is led to apply them to one of the most important principles of the mind,—our belief of the continuance of the laws of nature; or, in other words, our belief that the future course of nature will resemble the past. And here, too (as I already hinted), it is very generally admitted, that he has succeeded completely in overturning all the theories which profess to account for this belief by resolving it into a process of reasoning.¹ The only difference which seems to

Understanding; and *Sceptical Solution of these Doubts*. The title of the latter of these sections has, not altogether without reason, incurred the ridicule of Dr. Beattie, who translates it, *Doubtful Solution of Doubtful Doubts*. But the essay contains much sound and important matter, and throws a strong light on some of the chief difficulties which Mr Hume himself had started. Sufficient justice has not been done to it by his antagonists.)

¹ The incidental reference made, by way of illustration, in the following passage, to our *instinctive conviction* of the permanency of the laws of Nature, encourages me to hope, that, among candid and intelligent inquirers, it is now received as an acknowledged fact in the Theory of the Human Mind.

"The anxiety men have in all ages shown to obtain a fixed standard of value, and that remarkable agreement of nations,

remain among philosophers is, whether it can be explained, as Mr. Hume imagined, by means of the association of ideas ; or, whether it must be considered as an original and fundamental law of the human understanding ;—a question, undoubtedly abundantly curious, as a problem connected with the *Theory of the Mind* ; but to which more practical importance has sometimes been attached than I conceive to be necessary.¹

dissimilar in all other customs, in the use of one medium, on account of its superior fitness for that purpose, is itself a convincing proof how essential it is to our social interests. The notion of its permanency, although it be conventional and arbitrary, and liable, in reality, to many causes of variation, yet had gained so firm a hold on the minds of men, as to resemble, in its effects on their conduct, that *instinctive conviction of the permanency of the laws of nature which is the foundation of all our reasoning.*" (*A Letter to the Right Hon. R. Peel, M.P. for the University of Oxford*, by one of his Constituents. Second edition, p. 23.)

¹ The difference between the two opinions amounts to nothing more than this, whether our expectation of the continuance of the laws of nature results from a principle coëval with the first exercise of the senses ; or whether it arises gradually from the accommodation of the order of our thoughts to the established order of physical events. "Nature (as Mr. Hume himself observes) *may* certainly produce whatever can arise from habit ; nay, habit is nothing but one of the principles of nature, and derives all its force from that origin." (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 313.) Whatever ideas, therefore, and whatever principles we are unavoidably led to acquire by the circumstances in which we are placed, and by the exercise of those faculties which are essential to our preservation, are to be considered as parts of human nature, no less than those which are implanted in the mind at its first formation. Are not the acquired perceptions of sight and of hearing as much parts of human nature as the original perceptions of external objects which we obtain by the use of the hand ?

The passage quoted from Mr. Hume, in Note 2, p. 279, if attentively considered, will be found, when combined with these remarks, to throw a strong and pleasing light on his latest views with respect to this part of his philosophy.

In denying that our expectation of the continuance of the laws of nature is founded on reasoning, as well as in asserting our

That Mr. Hume himself conceived his refutation of the theories which profess to assign *a reason* for our faith in the permanence of the laws of nature, to be closely connected with his sceptical conclusions concerning *causation*, is quite evident from the general strain of his argument; and it is, therefore, not surprising that this refutation should have been looked on with a suspicious eye by his antagonists. Dr. Reid was, I believe, the first of these who had the sagacity to perceive, not only that it is strictly and incontrovertibly logical, but that it may be safely admitted, without any injury to the doctrines which it was brought forward to subvert.

Another of Mr. Hume's attacks on these doctrines was still bolder and more direct. In conducting it he took his vantage ground from his own account of the origin of our ideas. In this way he was led to expunge from his *Philosophical Vocabulary* every word of which the meaning cannot be explained by a reference to the *impression* from which the corresponding *idea* was originally copied. Nor was he startled in the application of this rule, by the consideration, that it would force him to condemn, as insignificant, many words which are to be found in all languages, and some of which express what are commonly regarded as the most important objects of human knowledge. Of this number are the words *cause* and *effect*; at least, in the sense in which they are commonly understood both by the vulgar and by philosophers. "One event (says he) follows another, but we never observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of any thing

ignorance of any necessary connections among physical events. Mr. Hume had been completely anticipated by some of his predecessors. (See the references mentioned in the Note, p. 275.) I do not, however, think that, before his time, philosophers were at all aware of the alarming consequences which, on a superficial view, *seem* to follow from this part of his system. Indeed, these consequences would never have been apprehended, had it not been supposed to form an essential link in his argument against the commonly received notion of Causation.

which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion seems to be, that we have no idea of connection or power at all; and that these words are absolutely without any meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life." (Hume's *Essays*, Vol. II. p. 79. Ed. of Lond. 1784.)

When this doctrine was first proposed by Mr. Hume, he appears to have been very strongly impressed with its repugnance to the common apprehensions of mankind. "I am sensible (he observes) that of all the paradoxes which I have had, or shall hereafter have occasion to advance in the course of this treatise, the present one is the most violent." (*Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 291.) It was probably owing to this impression that he did not fully unfold in that work all the consequences which, in his subsequent publications, he deduced from the same paradox; nor did he even apply it to invalidate the argument which infers the existence of an *intelligent* cause from the order of the universe. There cannot, however, be a doubt that he was aware, at this period of his life, of the conclusions to which it unavoidably leads, and which are indeed too obvious to escape the notice of a far less acute inquirer.

In a private letter of Mr. Hume's to one of his most intimate friends,¹ some light is thrown on the circumstances which first led his mind into this train of sceptical speculation. As his narrative has every appearance of the most perfect truth and candour, and contains several passages which I doubt not will be very generally interesting to my readers, I shall give it a place, together with some extracts from the correspondence to which it gave rise, in the Notes at the end of this *Dissertation*. Every thing connected with the origin and composition of a work which has had so powerful an influence on the direction which metaphysical pursuits have

¹ Sir Gilbert Elliot, Bart. grandfather of the present Earl of Minto. The originals of the letters to which I refer are in Lord Minto's possession.

since taken, both in Scotland¹ and in Germany, will be allowed to form an important article of philosophical history; and this history I need not offer any apology for choosing to com-

¹ A foreign writer, of great name (M. Frederick Schlegel,) seems to think that the influence of Mr. Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* on the Philosophy of England has been still more extensive than I had conceived it to be. His opinion on this point I transcribe as a sort of literary curiosity :

“ Since the time of Hume, nothing more has been attempted in England, than to erect all sorts of bulwarks against the practical influence of his destructive scepticism; and to maintain, by various substitutes and aids, the pile of moral principle uncorrupted and entire. *Not only with Adam Smith, but with all their late philosophers, national welfare is the ruling and central principle of thought;—a principle excellent and praiseworthy in its due situation, but quite unfitted for being the centre and oracle of all knowledge and science.*” From the connection in which this last sentence stands with the context, would not one imagine that the writer conceived the *Wealth of Nations* to be a new moral or metaphysical system, devised by Mr. Smith, for the purpose of counteracting Mr. Hume's scepticism ?

I have read this translation of Mr. Schlegel's lectures with much curiosity and interest, and flatter myself that we shall soon have English versions of the works of Kant, and of other German authors, from the pens of their English disciples. Little more, I am fully persuaded is necessary, in this country, to bring down the philosophy of Germany to its proper level.

In treating of literary and historical subjects, Mr. Schlegel seems to be more in his element, than when he ventures to pronounce on philosophical questions. But even in cases of the former description, some of his dashing judgments on English writers can be accounted for only by haste, caprice, or prejudice. “ The English themselves (we are told) are now pretty well convinced, that Robertson is a careless, superficial, and blundering historian: although they study his works, and are right in doing so, as models of pure composition, extremely deserving of attention during the present declining state of English style With all the abundance of his Italian elegance, what is the overloaded and affected Roscoe when compared with Gibbon ? Coxe, although master of a good and classical style, resembles Robertson in no respect so much as in the superficialness of his researches; and the statesman Fox has noth-

municate to the public rather in Mr. Hume's words than in my own.¹

From the reply to this letter by Mr. Hume's very ingenious and accomplished correspondent, we learn that he had drawn from Mr. Hume's metaphysical discussions the only sound and philosophical inference: that the lameness of the proofs offered by Descartes and his successors, of some fundamental truths universally acknowledged by mankind, proceeded, not from any defect in the evidence of these truths, but, on the contrary, from their being *self-evident*, and consequently unsusceptible of demonstration. We learn, farther, that the same conclusion had been adopted, at this early period, by another of Mr. Hume's friends, Mr. Henry Home, who, under the name of Lord Kames, was afterwards so well known in the learned world. Those who are acquainted with the subsequent publications of this distinguished and most respectable author will immediately recognize, in the account here given of the impression left on his mind by Mr. Hume's scepticism, the rudiments of a peculiar logic, which runs more or less through all his later works; and which, it must be acknowledged, he has, in various instances, carried to an unphilosophical extreme.²

The light in which Mr. Hume's scepticism appears from these extracts to have struck his friends, Sir Gilbert Elliot and Lord Kames, was very nearly the same with that in which it was afterwards viewed by Reid, Oswald, and

ing in common with Hume but the bigotry of his party zeal." Such criticisms may perhaps be applauded by a German auditory, but in this country they can injure the reputation of none but their author.

¹ See Note (II.)

² I allude particularly to the unnecessary multiplication, in his philosophical arguments, of internal senses and of instinctive principles.

Beattie, all of whom have manifestly aimed, with greater or less precision, at the same logical doctrine which I have just alluded to. This, too, was the very ground on which Father Buffier had (even before the publication of the *Treatise of Human Nature*) made his stand against similar theories, built by his predecessors on the Cartesian principles. The coincidence between his train of thinking, and that into which our Scottish metaphysicians soon after fell, is so very remarkable, that it has been considered by many as amounting to a proof that the plan of their works was, in some measure, suggested by his; but it is infinitely more probable, that the argument which runs, in common, through the speculations of all of them, was the natural result of the state of metaphysical science when they engaged in their philosophical inquiries.¹

The answer which Mr. Hume made to this argument, when it was first proposed to him in the easy intercourse

¹ Voltaire, in his catalogue of the illustrious writers who adorned the reign of Louis XIV. is one of the very few French authors who have spoken of Buffier with due respect: "Il y a dans ses traités de métaphysique des morceaux que Locke n'aurait pas désavoués, et c'est le seul jésuite qui ait mis une philosophie raisonnable dans ses ouvrages." Another French philosopher, too, of a very different school, and certainly not disposed to overrate the talents of Buffier, has, in a work published as lately as 1805, candidly acknowledged the lights which he might have derived from the labours of his predecessor, if he had been acquainted with them at an earlier period of his studies. Condillac, he also observes, might have profited greatly by the same lights, if he had availed himself of their guidance, in his inquiries concerning the human understanding. "Dumoins est il certain que pour ma part, je suis fort fâché de ne connoître que depuis très peu de temps ces opinions du Père Buffier; si je les avais vues plutôt énoncées quelque part, elles m'auraient épargné beaucoup de peines et d'hésitations."—"Je regrette beaucoup que Condillac, dans ses profondes et sagaces méditations sur l'intelligence humaine, n'ait pas fait plus d'attention aux idées du Père Buffier," &c. &c.—*Elémens d'Idéologie*, par M. Destutt-Tracy, Tom. III. pp. 136, 137. (See *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. pp. 88, 89, 2d edit.)

of private correspondence, seems to me an object of so much curiosity, as to justify me for bringing it under the eye of my readers in immediate connection with the foregoing details. Opinions thus communicated in the confidence of friendly discussion, possess a value which seldom belongs to propositions hazarded in those public controversies where the love of victory is apt to mingle, more or less, in the most candid minds, with the love of truth.

“ Your notion of correcting subtilty by *sentiment* is certainly very just with regard to morals, which depend upon sentiment: And in politics and natural philosophy, whatever conclusion is contrary to certain matters of fact, must certainly be wrong, and there must some error lie somewhere in the argument, whether we be able to show it or not. But, in metaphysics or theology, I cannot see how either of these plain and obvious standards of truth can have place. Nothing there can correct bad reasoning but good reasoning; and sophistry must be opposed by syllogism.¹ About seventy or eighty years ago,² I observe a principle like that which you advance prevailed very much in France, amongst some philosophers and beaux esprits. The occasion of it was this: The famous M. Nicole of the Port Royal, in his *Perpetuité de la Foi*, pushed the Protestants very hard upon the impossibility of the people’s reaching a conviction of their religion by the way of private judgment, which required so many disquisitions, reasons, researches, erudition, impartiality, and penetration, as not one of a hundred, even among men of education, is capable of.

¹ May not sophistry be also opposed, by appealing to the *fundamental laws of human belief*; and, in some cases, by appealing to *facts* for which we have the evidence of our own consciousness? The word *sentiment* does not express, with sufficient precision, the test which Mr. Hume’s correspondent had manifestly in view.

² This letter is dated 1751.

M. Claude and the Protestants answered him, not by solving his difficulties (which seems impossible), but by retorting them (which is very easy.) They showed, that to reach the way of authority which the Catholics insist on, as long a train of acute reasoning, and as great erudition was requisite, as would be sufficient for a Protestant. We must first prove all the truths of natural religion, the foundation of morals, the divine authority of the scripture, the deference which it commands to the church, the tradition of the church, &c. &c. The comparison of these controversial writings begat an idea in some, that it was neither by reasoning nor authority we learn our religion, but by sentiment; and this was certainly a very convenient way, and what a philosopher would be very well pleased to comply with, if he could distinguish sentiment from education. But, to all appearance, the sentiment of Stockholm, Geneva, Rome, ancient and modern, Athens, and Memphis, have the same characters; and no thinking man can implicitly assent to any of them, but from the general principle, that, as the truth on these subjects is beyond human capacity, and that, as for one's own ease, he must adopt some tenets, there is more satisfaction and convenience in holding to the catechism we have been first taught. Now, this I have nothing to say against. I would only observe, that such a conduct is founded on the most universal and determined scepticism. For more curiosity and research give a direct opposite turn from the same principles."

On this careless effusion of Mr. Hume's pen, it would be unpardonable to offer any critical strictures. It cannot, however, be considered as improper to hint, that there is a wide and essential difference between those articles of faith, which formed the subjects of dispute between Nicole and Claude, and those *laws of belief*, of which it is the great object of the *Treatise of Human Nature* to undermine the authority. The reply of Mr. Hume, therefore, is eva-

sive, and although strongly marked with the writer's ingenuity, does not bear upon the point in question.

As to the distinction alleged by Mr. Hume between the *criteria* of truth in natural philosophy and in metaphysics, I trust it will now be pretty generally granted, that, however well founded it may be when confined to the metaphysics of the schoolmen, it will by no means hold when extended to the inductive philosophy of the human mind. In this last science, no less than in natural philosophy, Mr. Hume's logical maxim may be laid down as a fundamental principle, that "whatever conclusion is contrary to matter of fact must be wrong, and there must some error lie somewhere in the argument, whether we be able to show it or not."

It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of Mr. Hume's literary life, and a proof of the sincerity with which he was then engaged in the search of truth, that, previous to the publication of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, he discovered a strong anxiety to submit it to the examination of the celebrated Dr. Butler, author of the *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*. For this purpose he applied to Mr. Henry Home, between whom and Dr. Butler some friendly letters appear to have passed before this period. "Your thoughts and mine (says Mr. Hume to his correspondent) agree with respect to Dr. Butler, and I would be glad to be introduced to him. I am at present castrating my work, that is, cutting off its nobler parts; that is, endeavouring it shall give as little offence as possible, before which I could not pretend to put it into the doctor's hands."¹ In another letter, he acknowledges Mr. Home's kindness in recommending

¹ For the rest of the letter, See *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Kames*, by Lord Woodhouselee, Vol. I. p. 84, *et seq.*

him to Dr. Butler's notice. "I shall not trouble you with any formal compliments or thanks, which would be but an ill return for the kindness you have done me in writing in my behalf, to one you are so little acquainted with as Dr. Butler; and, I am afraid, stretching the truth in favour of a friend. I have called on the doctor, with a design of delivering your letter, but find he is at present in the country. I am a little anxious to have the doctor's opinion. My own I dare not trust to; both because it concerns myself, and because it is so variable, that I know not how to fix it. Sometimes it elevates me above the clouds; at other times it depresses me with doubts and fears; so that, whatever be my success, I cannot be entirely disappointed."

Whether Mr. Hume ever enjoyed the satisfaction of a personal interview with Dr. Butler, I have not heard. From a letter of his to Mr. Home, dated London, 1739, we learn, that if any intercourse took place between them, it must have been after the publication of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. "I have sent the bishop of Bristol a copy; but could not wait upon him with your letter after he had arrived at that dignity. At least, I thought it would be to no purpose after I began the printing." In a subsequent letter to the same correspondent, written in 1742, he expresses his satisfaction at the favourable opinion which he understood Dr. Butler had formed of his volume of *Essays*, then recently published, and augurs well from this circumstance of the success of his book. "I am told that Dr. Butler has every where recommended them, so that I hope they will have some success."²

¹ *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Kames*, Vol. I. p. 92.

² *Ibid.* p. 404. The *Essays* here referred to were the first part of the *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, published in

These particulars, trifling as they may appear to some, seemed to me, for more reasons than one, not unworthy of notice in this sketch. Independently of the pleasing record they afford of the mutual respect entertained by the eminent men to whom they relate, for each other's philosophical talents, they have a closer connection with the history of metaphysical and moral inquiry in this island, than might be suspected by those who have not a very intimate acquaintance with the writings of both. Dr. Butler was, I think, the first of Mr. Locke's successors who clearly perceived the dangerous consequences likely to be deduced from his account of the origin of our ideas literally interpreted; and although he has touched on this subject but once, and that with his usual brevity, he has yet said enough to show, that his opinion with respect to it was the same with that formerly contended for by Cudworth, in opposition to Gassendi and Hobbes, and which has since been revived in different forms by the ablest of Mr. Hume's antagonists.¹ With these views, it may be reasonably supposed, that he was not displeased to see the consequences of Locke's doctrine so very logically and forcibly pushed to their utmost limits, as the most effectual means of rousing the attention of the learned to a re-examination of this fundamental principle. That he was perfectly aware, before the publication of Mr. Hume's work, of the encouragement given to scepticism by the logical maxims then in vogue, is evident from the concluding paragraph of his short *Essay on Personal Identity*. Had it

1742. The elegant author of these memoirs has inadvertently confounded this volume with the second part of that work, containing the *Political Discourses* (properly so called), which did not appear till ten years afterwards.

¹ See the short *Essay on Personal Identity*, at the end of Butler's *Analogy*; and compare the second paragraph with the remarks on this part of Locke's *Essay* by Dr. Price. (*Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties relating to Morals*, pp. 49, 50. 3d Ed. Lond. 1787.)

been published a few years later, nobody would have doubted, that it had been directly pointed at the general strain and spirit of Mr. Hume's philosophy.

“But though we are thus certain, that we are the same agents or living beings *now*, which we were as far back as our remembrance reaches ; yet it is asked, Whether we may not possibly be deceived in it ? And this question may be asked at the end of any demonstration whatever, because it is a question concerning the truth of perception by memory. And he who can doubt, whether perception by memory can in this case be depended on, may doubt also whether perception by deduction and reasoning, which also includes memory, or indeed whether intuitive perception can. Here then we can go no farther. For it is ridiculous to attempt to prove the truth of those perceptions whose truth we can no otherwise prove than by other perceptions of exactly the same kind with them, and which there is just the same ground to suspect ; or to attempt to prove the truth of our faculties, which can no otherwise be proved, than by the use or means of those very suspected faculties themselves.”¹

It is, however, less as a speculative metaphysician, than as a philosophical inquirer into the principles of morals, that I have been induced to associate the name of Butler with that of Hume. And, on this account, it may be thought that it would have been better to delay what I have now said of him till I come to trace the progress of

¹ I must not, however, be understood as giving unqualified praise to this Essay. It is by no means free from the old scholastic jargon, and contains some reasoning which, I may confidently assert, the author would not have employed, had it been written fifty years later. Whoever takes the trouble to read the paragraph beginning with these words, “*Thirdly*, Every person is conscious,” &c. will immediately perceive the truth of this remark. I mention it as a proof of the change to the better, which has taken place since Butler's time, in the mode of thinking and writing on Metaphysical questions.

Ethical Science during the eighteenth century. To myself it seemed more natural and interesting to connect this historical or rather biographical digression, with the earliest notice I was to take of Mr. Hume as an author. The numerous and important hints on metaphysical questions which are scattered over Butler's works, are sufficient of themselves to account for the space I have allotted to him among Locke's successors; if, indeed, any apology for this be necessary, after what I have already mentioned, of Mr. Hume's ambition to submit to his judgment the first fruits of his metaphysical studies.

The remarks hitherto made on the *Treatise of Human Nature* are confined entirely to the first volume. The speculations contained in the two others, on Morals, on the Nature and Foundations of Government, and on some other topics connected with political philosophy, will fall under our review afterwards.

Dr Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind* (published in 1764) was the first direct attack which appeared in Scotland upon the sceptical conclusions of Mr. Hume's philosophy. For my own opinion of this work I must refer to one of my former publications.¹ It is enough to remark here, that its great object is to refute the *Ideal Theory* which was then in complete possession of the schools, and upon which Dr. Reid conceived that the whole of Mr. Hume's philosophy, as well as the whole of Berkeley's reasonings against the existence of matter, was founded. According to this theory we are taught, that "nothing is perceived but what is in the mind which perceives it; that we do not really perceive things that are external, but only certain images and pictures of them imprinted upon the mind, which are called impressions and ideas."—"This doctrine (says Dr. Reid on another occasion) I once believed so firmly, as to embrace the

¹ See *Biographical Memoirs*, Edin. 1811.

whole of Berkeley's system along with it ; till finding other consequences to follow from it, which gave me more uneasiness than the want of a material world, it came into my mind, more than forty years ago, to put the question, What evidence have I for this doctrine, that all the objects of my knowledge are ideas in my own mind? From that time to the present, I have been candidly and impartially, as I think, seeking for the evidence of this principle ; but can find none, excepting the authority of philosophers."

On the refutation of the ideal theory, contained in this and his other works, Dr. Reid himself was disposed to rest his chief merit as an author. "The merit (says he in a letter to Dr. James Gregory) of what you are pleased to call *my Philosophy*, lies, I think, chiefly in having called in question the common theory of ideas or images of things in the mind being the only objects of thought ; a theory founded on natural prejudices, and so universally received as to be interwoven with the structure of language. Yet were I to give you a detail of what led me to call in question this theory, after I had long held it as self-evident and unquestionable, you would think, as I do, that there was much of chance in the matter. The discovery was the birth of time, not of genius ; and Berkeley and Hume did more to bring it to light than the man that hit upon it. I think there is hardly any thing that can be called *mine* in the philosophy of the mind, which does not follow with ease from the detection of this prejudice.

"I must, therefore, beg of you, most earnestly, to make no contrast in my favour to the disparagement of my predecessors in the same pursuits. I can truly say of them, and shall always avow, what you are pleased to say of me, that, but for the assistance I have received from their writ-

ings, I never could have wrote or thought what I have done."¹

When I reflect on the stress thus laid by Dr. Reid on this part of his writings, and his frequent recurrence to the same argument whenever his subject affords him an opportunity of forcing it upon the attention of his readers, I cannot help expressing my wonder, that Kant and other German philosophers, who appear to have so carefully studied those passa-

¹ An ingenious and profound writer, who, though intimately connected with Mr. Hume in habits of friendship, was not blind to the vulnerable parts of his Metaphysical System, has bestowed, in the latest of his publications, the following encomium on Dr. Reid's *Philosophical Works*.

"The author of an *Inquiry into the Mind*, and of subsequent *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man*, has great merit in the effect to which he has pursued this history. But, considering the point at which the science stood when he began his inquiries, he has, perhaps, no less merit in having removed the mist of hypothesis and metaphor, with which the subject was enveloped; and, in having taught us to state the facts of which we are conscious, not in figurative language, but in the terms which are proper to the subject. In this it will be our advantage to follow him; the more that, in former theories, so much attention had been paid to the introduction of *ideas* or *images* as the elements of knowledge, that the belief of any external existence or prototype has been left to be inferred from the mere idea or image; and this inference, indeed, is so little founded, that many who have come to examine its evidence have thought themselves warranted to deny it altogether. And hence the scepticism of ingenious men, who, not seeing a proper access to knowledge through the medium of ideas, without considering whether the road they had been directed to take was the true or a false one, denied the possibility of arriving at the end." (*Principles of Moral and Political Science*, by Dr. Adam Ferguson, Vol. I. pp. 75, 76.)

The work from which this passage is taken contains various important observations connected with the Philosophy of the Human Mind; but as the taste of the author led him much more strongly to moral and political speculations, than to researches concerning the intellectual powers of man, I have thought it right to reserve any remarks which I have to offer on his philosophical merits for the last part of this Discourse.

ges in Reid, which relate to Hume's Theory of Causation, should have overlooked entirely what he himself considered as the most original and important of all his discussions ; more especially as the conclusion to which it leads has been long admitted, by the best judges in this island, as one of the few propositions in metaphysical science completely established beyond the reach of controversy. Even those who affect to speak the most lightly of Dr. Reid's contributions to the philosophy of the human mind, have found nothing to object to his reasonings against the ideal theory, but that the absurdities involved in it are too glaring to require a serious examination.¹ Had these reasonings been

¹ I allude here more particularly to Dr. Priestley, who, in a work published in 1774, alleged, that when philosophers called ideas the *images* of external things, they are only to be understood as speaking figuratively ; and that Dr. Reid has gravely argued against this metaphorical language, as if it were meant to convey a theory of perception. The same remark has been repeated over and over since Priestley's time, by various writers. I have nothing to add in reply to it to what I long ago stated in my Philosophical Essays (see Note H. at the end of that work), but the following short quotation from Mr. Hume :—

“It seems evident, that, when men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion, that the one are nothing but *representations* of the other.* * * * But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an *image* or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. The table which we see seems to diminish as we remove farther from it ; but the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration. It was, therefore, nothing but its image which was present to the mind. These are the obvious dictates of reason.” (*Essay on the Academical Philosophy.*)

Is not this analogical theory of perception the principle on which the whole of Berkeley's reasonings against the existence of the material world, and of Hume's scepticism on the same subject, are founded ?

considered in the same light in Germany, it is quite impossible that the analogical language of Leibnitz, in which he speaks of the soul as *a living mirror of the universe*, could have been again revived; a mode of speaking liable to every objection which Reid has urged against the ideal theory. Such, however, it would appear, is the fact. The word *Representation* (*Vorstellung*) is now the German substitute for *Idea*; nay, one of the most able works which Germany has produced since the commencement of its new philosophical era, is entitled *Nova Theoria Facultatis Representativæ Humanæ*. In the same work, the author has prefixed, as a motto to the second book, in which he treats of “the *Representative Faculty* in general,” the following sentence from Locke, which he seems to have thought himself entitled to assume as a first principle: “Since the mind, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other *immediate* object but its own *ideas* (*representations*), which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them.”—(Locke’s *Essay*, B. IV. ch. 1.) In a country where this metaphysical jargon still passes current among writers of eminence, it is vain to expect that any solid progress can be made in the inductive philosophy of the human mind. A similar remark may be extended to another country, where the title of *Idéologie* (a word which takes for granted the truth of the hypothesis which it was Reid’s great aim to explode) has been lately given to the

The same analogy still continues to be sanctioned by some English philosophers of no small note. Long after the publication of Dr. Reid’s *Inquiry*, Mr. Horne Tooke quoted with approbation the following words of J. C. Scaliger: “Sicut in speculo ea quæ videntur non sunt, sed eorum *species*: ita quæ intelligimus, ea sunt re ipsâ extra nos, eorumque *species* in nobis. EST ENIM QUASI RERUM SPECULUM INTELLECTUS NOSTER; CUI, NISI PER SENSUM REPRESENTENTUR RES, NIHIL SCIT IPSE.”—(J. C. Scaliger, *de Causis*, L. I. cap. lxvi.) *Diversions of Purley*, Vol. I. p. 35, 2d Edition.

very science in which the theory of *Ideas* has been so clearly shown to have been, in all ages, the most fruitful source of error and absurdity.¹

Of the other works by Scottish metaphysicians, which appeared soon after the *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, I have not left myself room to speak. I know of none of them from which something important may not be learned ; while several of them (particularly those of Dr. Campbell) have struck out many new and interesting views. To one encomium all of them are well entitled, that of aiming steadily at the advancement of useful knowledge and of human happiness. But the principles on which they have proceeded have so close an affinity to those of Dr. Reid, that I could not, without repeating over what I have already said, enter into any explanation concerning their characteristical doctrines.

On comparing the opposition which Mr. Hume's scepticism encountered from his own countrymen, with the account formerly given of the attempts of some German philosophers to refute his Theory of Causation, it is impossible not to be struck with the coincidence between the leading views of his most eminent antagonists. This coincidence one would have been disposed to consider as purely accidental, if Kant, by his petulant sneers at Reid, Beattie, and Oswald, had not expressly acknowledged, that he was not unacquainted with their writings. As for the great dis-

¹ In censuring these metaphorical terms, I am far from supposing that the learned writers who have employed them have been all misled by the theoretical opinions involved in their language. Reinhold has been more particularly careful in guarding against such a misapprehension. But it cannot, I think, be doubted that the prevalence of such a phraseology must have a tendency to divert the attention from a just view of the mental phenomena, and to infuse into the mind of the young inquirer very false conceptions of the manner in which these phenomena ought to be studied.

covery, which he seems to claim as his own,—that the ideas of Cause and Effect, as well as many others, are derived from the *pure understanding* without any aid from experience, it is nothing more than a repetition, in very nearly the same terms, of what was advanced a century before by Cudworth, in reply to Hobbes and Gassendi; and borrowed avowedly by Cudworth from the reasonings of Socrates, as reported by Plato, in answer to the scepticism of Protagoras. This recurrence, under different forms, of the same metaphysical controversies, which so often surprises and mortifies us in the history of literature, is an evil which will probably always continue, more or less, even in the most prosperous state of philosophy. But it affords no objection to the utility of metaphysical pursuits. While the sceptics keep the field, it must not be abandoned by the friends of sounder principles; nor ought they to be discouraged from their ungrateful task, by the reflection, that they have probably been anticipated, in everything they have to say, by more than one of their predecessors. If anything is likely to check this periodical return of a mischief so unpropitious to the progress of useful knowledge, it seems to be the general diffusion of that historical information concerning the literature and science of former times, of which it is the aim of these Preliminary Dissertations to present an outline. Should it fail in preventing the occasional revival of obsolete paradoxes, it will, at least, diminish the wonder and admiration with which they are apt to be regarded by the multitude.

And here I cannot refrain from remarking the injustice with which the advocates for truth are apt to be treated; and by none more remarkably than by that class of writers who profess the greatest zeal for its triumph. The importance of their labours is discredited by those who are the loudest in their declamations and invectives against the licentious philosophy of the present age; insomuch that a

careless observer would be inclined to imagine (if I may borrow Mr. Hume's words on another occasion), that the battle was fought "not by the men at arms, who manage the pike and the sword; but by the trumpeters, drummers, and musicians, of the army."

These observations may serve, at the same time, to account for the slow and (according to some persons) imperceptible advances of the philosophy of the human mind, since the publication of Locke's *Essay*. With those who still attach themselves to that author, as an infallible guide in metaphysics, it is in vain to argue; but I would willingly appeal to any of Locke's rational and discriminating admirers, whether much has not been done by his successors, and, among others, by members of our northern universities, towards the illustration and correction of such of his principles as have furnished, both to English and French sceptics, the foundation of their theories.¹ If this be granted, the way has, at least, been cleared and prepared for the labours of our posterity; and neither the cavils of the sceptic, nor the refutation of them by the sounder logician, can be pronounced to be useless to mankind. Nothing can

¹ According to Dr. Priestley, the labours of these commentators on Locke have done more harm than good. "I think Mr. Locke has been hasty in concluding that there is some other source of our ideas besides the external senses; but the rest of his system appears to me and others to be the corner stone of all just and rational knowledge of ourselves."

"This solid foundation, however, has lately been attempted to be overturned by a set of pretended philosophers, of whom the most conspicuous and assuming is Dr. Reid, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow."—(*Exam. of Reid, Beattie, and Oswald*, p. 5.)—As to Mr. Hume, Dr. Priestley says, "In my opinion, he has been *very ably* answered, again and again, upon more solid principles than those of this new common sense; and I beg leave to refer to the two first volumes of my *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*;"—(*Examination of Reid, &c.* Preface, p. xxvii.)

be juster or more liberal than the following reflection of Reid: "I conceive the sceptical writers to be a set of men, whose business it is to pick holes in the fabric of knowledge wherever it is weak and faulty; and when those places are properly repaired, the whole building becomes more firm and solid than it was formerly."—(*Inquiry into the Human Mind*. Dedication.)

There is, indeed, one point of view, in which, it must be owned, that Mr. Hume's *Treatise* has had an unfavourable effect (and more especially in Scotland) on the progress of Metaphysical Science. Had it not been for the zeal of some of his countrymen to oppose the sceptical conclusions, which they conceived it to be his aim to establish, much of that ingenuity which has been wasted in the refutation of his sophistry (or, to speak more correctly, in combating the mistaken principles on which he proceeded) would, in all probability, have been directed to speculations more immediately applicable to the business of life, or more agreeable to the taste of the present age. What might not have been expected from Mr. Hume himself, had his powerful and accomplished mind been more frequently turned to the study of some parts of our nature (of those, for example, which are connected with the principles of criticism), in examining which, the sceptical bias of his disposition would have had fewer opportunities of leading him astray! In some fragments of this sort, which enliven and adorn his collection of *Essays*, one is at a loss whether more to admire the subtlety of his genius, or the solidity and good sense of his critical judgments.

Nor have these elegant applications of metaphysical pursuits been altogether overlooked by Mr. Hume's antagonists. The active and adventurous spirit of Lord Kames, here, as in many other instances, led the way to his countrymen; and, due allowances being made for the novelty and magnitude of his undertaking, with a success far greater

than could have been reasonably anticipated. The *Elements of Criticism*, considered as the first systematical attempt to investigate the metaphysical principles of the fine arts, possesses, in spite of its numerous defects both in point of taste and of philosophy, infinite merits, and will ever be regarded as a literary wonder by those who know how small a portion of his time it was possible for the author to allot to the composition of it, amidst the imperious and multifarious duties of a most active and useful life. Campbell and Gerard, with a sounder philosophy, and Beattie, with a much more lively relish for the Sublime and the Beautiful, followed afterwards in the same path; and have all contributed to create and to diffuse over this island a taste for a higher and more enlightened species of criticism than was known to our forefathers. Among the many advantageous results with which this study has been already attended, the most important, undoubtedly, is the new and pleasing avenue which it has opened to an analysis of the laws which regulate the intellectual phenomena; and the interest which it has thus lent, in the estimation of men of the world, to inquiries which, not many years before, were seldom heard of, but within the walls of an university.

Dr. Reid's two volumes of *Essays on the Intellectual and on the Active Powers of Man* (the former of which appeared in 1785, and the latter in 1788) are the latest philosophical publications from Scotland of which I shall at present take notice. They are less highly finished, both in matter and in form, than his *Inquiry into the Human Mind*. They contain also some repetitions, to which, I am afraid, I must add a few trifling inconsistencies of expression, for which the advanced age of the author, who was then approaching to fourscore, claims every indulgence from a candid reader. Perhaps, too, it may be questioned, whether, in one or two instances, his zeal for an important conclu-

sion has not led him to avail himself of some dubious reasonings, which might have been omitted without any prejudice to his general argument. "The value of these volumes, however (as I have elsewhere remarked), is inestimable to future adventurers in the same arduous inquiries, not only in consequence of the aids they furnish as a rough draught of the field to be examined, but by the example they exhibit of a method of investigation on such subjects, hitherto very imperfectly understood, even by those philosophers who call themselves the disciples of Locke. It is by the logical rigour of this method, so systematically pursued in all his researches, still more than by the importance of his particular conclusions, that he stands so conspicuously distinguished among those who have hitherto prosecuted analytically the study of man."¹

His acquaintance with the metaphysical doctrines of his predecessors does not appear to have been very extensive; with those of his own contemporaries it was remarkably deficient. I do not recollect that he has anywhere mentioned the names either of Condillac or of D'Alembert. It is impossible not to regret this, not only as it has deprived us of his critical judgments on some celebrated theories, but as it has prevented him from enlivening his works with that variety of historical discussion so peculiarly agreeable in these abstract researches.

On the other hand, Dr. Reid's limited range of metaphysical reading, by forcing him to draw the materials of his philosophical speculations almost entirely from his own reflections, has given to his style, both of thinking and of writing, a characteristical unity and simplicity seldom to be met with in so voluminous an author. He sometimes, indeed, repeats, with an air of originality, what had been previously said by his predecessors; but on these, as on all other occasions, he

¹ *Biographical Account of Reid.*

has at least the merit of thinking for himself, and of sanctioning, by the weight of his unbiassed judgment, the conclusions which he adopts. It is this uniformity of thought and design, which, according to Dr. Butler, is the best test of an author's sincerity ; and I am apt to regard it also, in these abstruse disquisitions, as one of the surest marks of liberal and unfettered inquiry.

In comparing Dr. Reid's publications at different periods of his life, it is interesting to observe his growing partiality for the aphoristical style. Some of his *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers of Man* are little more than a series of detached paragraphs, consisting of leading thoughts, of which the reader is left to trace the connection by his own sagacity. To this aphoristical style it is not improbable that he was partly led by the indolence incident to advanced years, as it relieved him from what Boileau justly considered as the most difficult task of an author, the skilful management of *transitions*.¹ In consequence of this want of continuity in his compositions, a good deal of popular effect is unavoidably lost ; but, on the other hand, to the few who have a taste for such inquiries, and who value books chiefly as they furnish exercise to their own thoughts (a class of readers who are alone competent to pronounce a judgment on metaphysical questions,) there is a peculiar charm in a mode of writing, so admirably calculated to give *relief* to the author's ideas, and to awaken, at every sentence, the reflections of his readers.

When I review what I have now written on the history of Metaphysics in Scotland, since the publication of Mr. Hume's *Treatise*, and at the same time recollect the laurels which, during the same period, have been won by Scottish authors, in every other department of literature and of science, I

¹ Boileau is said, by the younger Racine, to have made this remark in speaking of La Bruyere : " Il disoit que La Bruyere s'etoit épargné le plus difficile d'un ouvrage en s'épargnant les transitions." (*Mémoire sur la Vie de Jean Racine*.)

must acknowledge that, instead of being mortified at the slender amount of their contributions to the philosophy of the human mind, I am more disposed to wonder at their successful perseverance in cultivating a field of study, where the approbation of a few enlightened and candid judges is the only reward to which their ambition could aspire. Small as their progress may hitherto have been, it will at least not suffer by a comparison with what has been accomplished by their contemporaries in any other part of Europe.

It may not be useless to add in this place, that, if little has as yet been done, the more ample is the field left for the industry of our successors. The compilation of a *Manual of Rational Logic*, adapted to the present state of science and of society in Europe, is a *desideratum* which, it is to be hoped, will at no distant period be supplied. It is a work, certainly, of which the execution has been greatly facilitated by the philosophical labours of the last century. The varieties of intellectual character among men present another very interesting object of study, which, considering its practical utility, has not yet excited, so much as might have been expected, the curiosity of our countrymen. Much, too, is still wanting to complete the theory of evidence. Campbell has touched upon it with his usual acuteness, but he has attempted nothing more than an illustration of a very few general principles. Nor has he turned his attention to the various illusions of the imagination and of the passions, by which the judgment is liable to be warped in the estimates it forms of moral evidence in the common affairs of life. This is a most important inquiry, considering how often the lives and fortunes of men are subjected to the decisions of illiterate persons concerning circumstantial proof; and how much the success or failure of every individual in the conduct of his private concerns turns on the sagacity or rashness with which he anticipates future contingencies. Since the time when Campbell

wrote, an attempt has been made by Condorcet¹ and some other French writers, to apply a mathematical calculus to moral and political truths; but though much metaphysical ingenuity, as well as mathematical skill, have been displayed in carrying it into execution, it has not yet led to any useful practical results. Perhaps it may even be questioned, whether, in investigating truths of this sort, the intellectual powers can derive much aid from the employment of such an organ. To define accurately and distinctly the limits of its legitimate province, still remains a *desideratum* in this abstruse part of logic.

Nearly connected with this subject are the metaphysical principles assumed in the mathematical Calculation of Probabilities; in delivering which principles, some foreign mathematicians, with the illustrious La Place at their head, have blended, with many unquestionable and highly interesting conclusions, various moral paralogisms of the most pernicious tendency. A critical examination of these paralogisms, which are apt to escape the attention of the reader amid the variety of original and luminous discussions with which they are surrounded, would, in my humble apprehension, be one of the most essential services which could at present be rendered to true philosophy. In the mind of La Place, their origin may be fairly traced to an ambition, not altogether unnatural in so transcendent a genius, to extend the empire of his favourite science over the moral as well as the material world.² I have mentioned but a few out of the innumerable topics which crowd upon me as fit objects of inquiry for the rising generation.³ Nor have I been guided in my selec-

¹ *Essai sur l'application de l'Analyse à la Probabilité des Décisions rendues à la pluralité des Voix.*

² The paralogisms to which I allude did not fall within the scope of the admirable criticism on this work in the *Edinburgh Review*.

³ Among these, the most prominent is the Natural or Theoretical History of Language (including under this title *written as*

tion of these by any other consideration, than their peculiar adaptation to the actual circumstances of the philosophical world.

Should such men as Hume, Smith, and Reid again arise, their curiosity would, in all probability, be turned to some applications of metaphysical principles of a more popular and practical nature than those which chiefly engaged their curiosity. At the same time, let us not forget what a step they made beyond the scholastic philosophy of the preceding age; and how necessary this step was as a preliminary to other researches bearing more directly and palpably on human affairs.

The most popular objection hitherto made to our Scottish metaphysicians is, that, in treating of human nature, they have overlooked altogether the corporeal part of our frame. From the contempt which they have uniformly expressed for all physiological theories concerning the intellectual phenomena, it has been concluded, that they were disposed to consider the human mind as altogether independent of the influence of physical causes. Mr. Belsham has carried this charge so far, as to sneer at Dr. Reid's inconsistency for having somewhere acknowledged, "in opposition to his systematical principles, that a certain constitution or state of the brain is necessary to memory." In reply to this charge, it may be confidently asserted, that no set of philosophers, since the time of Lord Bacon, have entertained juster views on this subject than the school to which Dr. Reid belonged. In proof of this, I need only appeal to the *Lectures on the Duties and Qualifications*

well as *oral language*), a subject which will probably continue to furnish new problems to human ingenuity, in the most improved state of human knowledge. It is not surprising, that an art which lays the foundation of all the others, and which is so intimately connected with the exercise of reason itself, should leave behind it such faint and obscure traces of its origin and infancy.

of a Physician, by the late learned and ingenious Dr. John Gregory. Among the different articles connected with the natural history of the human species, which he has there recommended to the examination of the medical student, he lays particular stress on "the laws of union between the mind and body, and the mutual influence they have upon one another." "This (he observes) is one of the most important inquiries that ever engaged the attention of mankind, and almost equally necessary in the sciences of morals and of medicine." It must be remarked, however, that it is only the *laws* which regulate the union between mind and body (the same class of *facts* which Bacon called the *doctrina de fœdere*), which are here pointed out as proper objects of philosophical curiosity; for as to any *hypothesis* concerning the *manner* in which the union is carried on, this most sagacious writer was well aware, that they are not more unfavourable to the improvement of logic and of ethics, than to a skilful and judicious exercise of the healing art.

I may perhaps form too high an estimate of the progress of knowledge during the last fifty years; but I think I can perceive, within the period of my own recollection, not only a change to the better in the Philosophy of the Human Mind, but in the speculations of medical inquirers. Physiological theories concerning the functions of the nerves in producing the intellectual phenomena have pretty generally fallen into contempt: and, on the other hand, a large accession has been made to our stock of well authenticated facts, both with respect to the influence of body on mind, and of mind upon body. As examples of this, it is sufficient to mention the experimental inquiries instituted, in consequence of the pretended cures effected by means of Animal Magnetism and of Tractors; to which may be added, the philosophical spirit evinced in some late publications on Insanity.

Another objection, not so entirely groundless, which has been made to the same school, is, that their mode of philoso-

phising has led to an unnecessary multiplication of our *internal senses and instinctive determinations*. For this error, I have elsewhere attempted to account and to apologize.¹ On the present occasion I shall only remark, that it is at least a safer error than the opposite extreme, so fashionable of late among our southern neighbours, of endeavouring to explain away, without any exception, all our *instinctive* principles, both speculative and practical. A literal interpretation of Locke's comparison of the infant mind to a *sheet of white paper* (a comparison which, if I am rightly informed, has not yet wholly lost its credit in all our universities), naturally predisposed his followers to embrace this theory, and enabled them to shelter it from a free examination, under the sanction of his supposed authority. Dr. Paley, himself, in his earliest philosophical publication, yielded so far to the prejudices in which he had been educated, as to dispute the existence of the *moral faculty*;² although, in his more advanced years, he amply atoned for this error of his youth, by the ingenuity and acuteness with which he combated the reasonings employed by some of his contemporaries, to invalidate the proofs afforded by the phenomena of *instinct*, of the existence of a designing and provident cause. In this part of his work, he has plainly in his eye the *Zoonomia* of Dr.

¹ *Biographical Memoirs*, p. 472.

² After relating, in the words of Valerius Maximus, the noted story of Caius Toranius, who betrayed his affectionate and excellent father to the triumvirate, Dr. Paley thus proceeds:

“Now the question is, whether, if this story were related to the wild boy caught some years ago in the woods of Hanover, or to a savage without experience and without instruction, cut off in his infancy from all intercourse with his species, and consequently under no possible influence of example, authority, education, sympathy, or habit; whether, I say, such a one would feel, upon the relation, any degree of that *sentiment of disapprobation of Toranius's* which we feel or not?”

“They who maintain the existence of a moral sense, of innate maxims, of a natural conscience—that the love of virtue

Darwin,[†] where the same principles, of which Paley and others had availed themselves to disapprove the existence of instinct and instinctive propensities in man, are eagerly laid hold of to disprove the existence of *instinct* in the brutes. Without such an extension of the argument, it was clearly

and hatred of vice are instinctive, or the perception of right or wrong intuitive (all of which are only different ways of expressing the same opinion), affirm that he would.

“They who deny the existence of a moral sense, &c. affirm that he would not.

“And upon this issue is joined.” (*Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, B. I. Chap. 5.)

To those who are at all acquainted with the history of this dispute, it must appear evident that the question is here completely mistated; and that, in the whole of Dr. Paley’s subsequent argument on the subject, he combats a phantom of his own imagination. The opinion which he ascribes to his antagonists has been loudly and repeatedly disavowed by all the most eminent moralists who have disputed Locke’s reasonings against *innate practical principles*; and is, indeed, so very obviously absurd, that it never could have been for a moment entertained by any person in his senses.

Did it ever enter into the mind of the wildest theorist to imagine that the sense of seeing would enable a man brought up, from the moment of his birth, in utter darkness, to form a conception of light and colours? But would it not be equally rash to conclude from the extravagance of such a supposition, that the sense of seeing is not an original part of the human frame?

The above quotation from Paley forces me to remark, farther, that, in combating the supposition of a *moral sense*, he has confounded together, as *only different ways of expressing the same opinion*, a variety of systems, which are regarded by all our best philosophers, not only as essentially distinct, but as in some measure standing in opposition to each other. The system of Hutcheson, for example, is identified with that of Cudworth. But although, in this instance, the author’s logical discrimination does not appear to much advantage, the sweeping censure thus bestowed on so many of our most celebrated ethical theories, has the merit of throwing a very strong light on that particular view of the subject which it is the aim of his reasonings to establish, in contradiction to them all.

[†] See the section on Instinct. (Sect. XVI. of that work.)

perceived by Darwin, that sufficient evidences of the existence of a Designing Cause would be afforded by the phenomena of the lower animals ; and, accordingly, he has employed much ingenuity to show, that all these phenomena may be accounted for by experience, or by the influence of pleasurable or painful sensations, operating *at the moment* on the animal frame.

In opposition to this theory, it is maintained by Paley, that it is by *instinct*, that is (according to his own definition), “by a propensity prior to experience, and independent of instruction,” “that the sexes of animals seek each other ; that animals cherish their offspring ; that the young quadruped is directed to the teat of its dam ; that birds build their nest, and brood with so much patience upon their eggs ; that insects, which do not sit upon their eggs, deposit them in those particular situations in which the young, when hatched, find their appropriate food ; that it is instinct which carries the salmon, and some other fish, out of the sea into rivers, for the purpose of shedding their spawn in fresh water.”¹

In Dr. Paley’s very able and convincing reasonings on these various points, he has undoubtedly approached nearer to the spirit of what has been ironically called *Scottish* philosophy,² than any of Mr. Locke’s English disciples, since the time of Dr. Butler ; a circumstance which, when com-

¹ Paley’s *Natural Theology*, p. 324.

² May I take the liberty of requesting the reader to compare a few pages of Dr. Paley’s Section on Instinct, beginning, “*I am not ignorant of the theory which resolves instinct into sensation,*” &c. with some remarks made by the author of this Dissertation, in an Account of the Life and Writings of Dr. Reid? See the passage in section second, beginning thus, “*In a very original work, on which I have already hazarded some criticisms,*” &c. As both publications appeared about the same time (in the year 1802), the coincidence, in point of thought, must have been wholly accidental, and as such affords no slight presumption in favour of its soundness.

pared with the metaphysical creed of his earlier years, reflects the greatest honour on the candour and fairness of his mind, and encourages the hope, that this philosophy, where it is equally sound, will gradually and silently work its way among sincere inquirers after truth, in spite of the strong prejudices which many of our southern neighbours still appear to entertain against it. The extravagancies of Darwin, it is probable, first opened Dr. Paley's eyes to the dangerous tendency of Locke's argument against innate principles, when inculcated without due limitations.¹

With this very faint outline of the speculations of Locke's chief successors in Scotland, prior to the close of Dr.

¹ When Dr. Paley published his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, he seems to have attached himself much too slavishly to the opinions of Bishop Law, to whom that work is inscribed. Hence, probably, his anxiety to disprove the existence of the moral faculty. Of the length to which Law was disposed to carry Locke's argument against innate principles, he has enabled us to judge by his own explicit declaration: "I take implanted *senses, instincts, appetites, passions, and affections*, &c. to be a remnant of the old philosophy, which used to call every thing *innate* that it could not account for; and therefore heartily wish, that they were in one sense all eradicated, which was undoubtedly the aim of that great author last mentioned (Mr. Locke), as it was a natural consequence of his first book." (Law's translation of Archbishop King *On the Origin of Evil*, p. 79, note.)

In justice, however, to Dr. Law, it must be observed, that he appears to have been fully aware that the dispute about innate principles was in a great measure verbal. "It will really (says he) come to the same thing with regard to the moral attributes of God and the nature of virtue and vice, whether the Deity has *implanted* these instincts and affections in us, or has framed and disposed us in such a manner, has given us such powers, and placed us in such circumstances, that we must *necessarily acquire them*." (*Ibid.*) But if Dr. Law was aware of this, why should he and his followers have attached such infinite importance to the controversy?

Reid's literary labours, I shall for the present finish my review of the metaphysical pursuits of the eighteenth century. The long period which has since elapsed has been too much crowded with great political events to favour the growth of abstract science in any of its branches; and of the little which appears to have been done, during this interval, in other parts of Europe, towards the advancement of true philosophy, the interrupted communication between this island and the Continent left us for many years in a state of almost total ignorance. This chasm, in our information concerning foreign literature, it may not be a difficult task for younger men to supply. At my time of life it would be folly to attempt it; nor, perhaps, is any author, who has himself been so frequently before the public, the fittest person to form an impartial estimate of the merits of his living contemporaries. Now, however, when peace is at length restored to the world, it may reasonably be hoped that the human mind will again resume her former career with renovated energy; and that the nineteenth century will not yield to the eighteenth in furnishing materials to those who may hereafter delight to trace the progressive improvement of their species. In the meantime, instead of indulging myself in looking forward to the future, I shall conclude this section with a few general reflections suggested by the foregoing retrospect.

Among these reflections, what chiefly strikes my own mind is the extraordinary change which has gradually and insensibly taken place since the publication of Locke's *Essay*, in the meaning of the word *Metaphysics*; a word formerly appropriated to the ontology and pneumatology of the schools, but now understood as equally applicable to all those inquiries, which have, for their object, to trace the various branches of human knowledge to their first princi-

ples in the constitution of our nature.¹ This change can be accounted for only by a change in the philosophical pursuits of Locke's successors; a change from the idle abstractions and subtleties of the dark ages, to studies subservient to the culture of the understanding; to the successful exercise of its faculties and powers; and to a knowledge of the great ends and purposes of our being. It may be regarded, therefore, as a palpable and incontrovertible proof of a corresponding progress of reason in this part of the world.

On comparing together the multifarious studies now classed together under the title of Metaphysics, it will be found difficult to trace any common circumstance but this, that they all require the same sort of mental exertion for their prosecution; the exercise, I mean, of that power (called by Locke *reflection*) by which the mind turns its attention inwards upon its own operations, and the subjects of its own consciousness. In researches concerning our intellectual and active powers, the mind directs its attention to the faculties which it exercises, or to the propensities which put these faculties in motion. In all the other inquiries which fall under the province of the Metaphysician, the materials of his reasoning are drawn chiefly from

¹The following is the account of Metaphysics given by Hobbes:—"There is a certain *Philosophia prima*, on which all other Philosophy ought to depend; and consisteth principally in right limiting of the significations of such appellations, or names, as are of all others the most universal: which limitations serve to avoid ambiguity, and equivocation in reasoning; and are commonly called Definitions; such as are the Definitions of Body, Time, Place, Matter, Form, Essence, Subject, Substance, Accident, Power, Act, Finite, Infinite, Quantity, Quality, Motion, Action, Passion, and divers others, necessary to the explaining of a man's conceptions concerning the nature and generation of bodies. The explication (that is, the settling of the meaning) of which, and the like terms, is commonly in the schools called *Metaphysics*." (*Moral and Political Works*. Folio Edit. London, 1750, p. 399.)

his own internal resources. Nor is this observation less applicable to speculations which relate to things external, than to such as are confined to the thinking and sentient principle within him. In carrying on his researches (for example) concerning hardness, softness, figure, and motion, he finds it not less necessary to retire within himself, than in studying the laws of imagination or memory. Indeed, in such cases, the whole aim of his studies is to obtain a more precise definition of his *ideas*, and to ascertain the occasions on which they are formed.

From this account of the nature and object of metaphysical science, it may be reasonably expected, that those with whom it is a favourite and habitual pursuit, should acquire a more than ordinary capacity of retiring, at pleasure, from the external to the internal world. They may be expected also to acquire a disposition to examine the origin of whatsoever combinations they may find established in the fancy, and a superiority to the casual associations which warp common understandings. Hence an accuracy and a subtlety in their distinctions on all subjects, and those peculiarities in their views which are characteristic of unbiassed and original thinking. But, perhaps, the most valuable fruit of their researches, is that scrupulous precision in the use of language, upon which, more than upon any one circumstance whatever, the logical accuracy of our reasonings, and the justness of our conclusions, essentially depend. Accordingly it will be found, on a review of the history of the moral sciences, that the most important steps which have been made in some of those, apparently the most remote from metaphysical pursuits (in the science, for example, of political economy), have been made by men trained to the exercise of their intellectual powers by early habits of abstract meditation. To this fact Burke probably alluded, when he remarked, that “by turning the soul inward on itself, its

forces are concentered, and are fitted for stronger and bolder flights of science; and that in such pursuits, whether we take, or whether we lose the game, the chace is certainly of service." The names of Locke, of Berkeley, of Hume, of Quesnai, of Turgot, of Morellet, and above all, of Adam Smith, will at once illustrate the truth of these observations, and show, that, in combining together, in this Dissertation, the sciences of Metaphysics, of Ethics, and of Politics, I have not adopted an arrangement altogether capricious.¹

In farther justification of this arrangement, I might appeal to the popular prejudices so industriously fostered by many, against these three branches of knowledge, as ramifications from one common and most pernicious root. How often have Mr. Smith's reasonings in favour of the freedom of trade been ridiculed as *metaphysical* and visionary! Nay, but a few years have elapsed, since this epithet (accompanied with the still more opprobrious terms of Atheistical and Democratical) was applied to the argument then urged against

¹ It furnishes no objection to these remarks, that some of our best treatises on questions of political economy have proceeded from men who were strangers to metaphysical studies. It is enough for my purpose if it be granted, that it was by habits of metaphysical thinking that the minds of those authors were formed, by whom political economy was first exalted to the dignity of a science. To a great proportion even of the learned, the rules of a sound logic are best taught by examples; and when a precise and well-defined phraseology is once introduced, the speculations of the most ordinary writers assume an appearance (sometimes, it must be owned, a very fallacious one) of depth and consistency.

Fontenelle remarks, that a single great man is sufficient to accomplish a change in the taste of his age, and that the perspicuity and method for which Descartes was indebted to his mathematical researches, were successfully copied by many of his contemporaries who were ignorant of mathematics. A similar observation will be found to apply, with still greater force, to the models of metaphysical analysis and of logical discussion, exhibited in the political works of Hume and of Smith.

the morality and policy of the slave-trade ; and, in general, to every speculation in which any appeal was made to the beneficent arrangements of nature, or to the progressive improvement of the human race. Absurd as this language was, it could not, for a moment, have obtained any currency with the multitude, had there not been an obvious connection between these liberal doctrines, and the well known habits of logical thinking, which so eminently distinguished their authors and advocates. Whatever praise, therefore, may be due to the fathers of the modern science of political economy, belongs, at least in part (according to the acknowledgment of their most decided adversaries), to those abstract studies by which they were prepared for an analytical investigation of its first and fundamental principles.

Other connections and affinities between Political Economy and the Philosophy of the Human Mind will present themselves afterwards. At present I purposely confine myself to that which is most obvious and indisputable.

The influence of metaphysical studies may be also perceived in the philosophical spirit so largely infused into the best historical compositions of the last century. This spirit has, indeed, been often perverted to pernicious purposes ; but who can doubt, that, on the whole, both history and philosophy have gained infinitely by the alliance ?

How far a similar alliance has been advantageous to our poetry, may be more reasonably questioned. But on the most unfavourable supposition it must be admitted, that the number of poetical readers has thereby been greatly increased, and the pleasures of imagination proportionally communicated to a wider circle. The same remark may be extended to the study of philosophical criticism. If it has not contributed to the encouragement of original genius in the fine arts, it has been followed by a much more beneficial result in diffusing a relish for the beautiful and

the elegant ; not to mention its influence in correcting and fixing the public taste, by the precision and steadiness of the principles to which it appeals.¹

Another instance, still more important, of the practical influence of metaphysical science, is the improvement which, since the time of Locke, has become general in the conduct of education, both private and public. In the former case, the fact is universally acknowledged. But even in our universities (notwithstanding the proverbial aversion of most of them to every thing which savours of innovation) what a change has been gradually accomplished since the beginning of the eighteenth century ! The studies of Ontology, of Pneumatology, and of Dialectics, have been supplanted by that of the Human Mind, conducted with more or less success, on the plan of Locke's *Essay* ; and, in a few seats of learning, by the studies of Bacon's Method of Inquiry, of the Principles of Philosophical Criticism, and of the Elements of Political Economy. In all this an approach has been made or attempted, to what Locke so earnestly recommended to parents, "that their children's time should be spent in acquiring what may be useful to them when they come to be men." Many other circumstances, no doubt, have contributed their share in producing this revolution ; but what individual can be compared to Locke in giving the first impulse to that spirit of reform by which it has been established ?²

¹ See some admirable remarks on this subject by Gray, in his comments on the *Io* of Plato. (Edition of *Gray*, by Mathias.)

² Under this head of education may also be mentioned the practical improvements which, during the course of the last century, have taken place in what Lord Bacon calls *the traditive part of logic*. I allude here not only to the new arrangements in the Lancastrian Schools, by which the diffusion of the art of reading among the poorer classes of the community is so wonderfully facilitated and extended, but to those admirable elementary works which have opened a ready and speedy access

In consequence of the operation of these causes, a sensible change has taken place in the style of English composition.¹ The number of idiomatical phrases has been abridg-

to the more recondite truths of the severer sciences. How much these have contributed to promote the progress of mathematical knowledge in France, may be judged of from an assertion of Condorcet, that two years spent under an able teacher now carry the student beyond the conclusions which limited the researches of Leibnitz and of Newton. The Essays lately published on this subject by M. Lacroix (*Essais sur l'Enseignement en Général, et sur celui des Mathématiques en particulier*; Paris, 1805) contain many valuable suggestions; and, beside their utility to those who are concerned in the task of instruction, may justly be considered as an accession to the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

¹ See some judicious remarks on this subject in Mr. Godwin's *Inquirer*, p. 274. In the opinion of this author, "the English language is now written with more grammatical propriety than by the best of our ancestors; and with a much higher degree of energy and vigour. The spirit of philosophy has infused itself into the structure of our sentences." He remarks farther, in favour of the present style of English composition, "that it at once satisfies the understanding and the ear." The union of these two excellencies certainly constitutes the perfection of writing. Johnson boasts, and with truth, in the concluding paper of the *Rambler*, that he had "added something to our language in the elegance of its construction, and something in the harmony of its cadence;" but what a sacrifice did he make to these objects, of conciseness, of simplicity, and of (what he has himself called) *Genuine Anglicism*. To accomplish the same ends, without any sacrifice of these higher merits, has been one of the chief aims of the most eminent among his successors.

As an instrument of thought and a medium of scientific communication, the English language appears to me, in its present state, to be far superior to the French. Diderot, indeed (a very high authority,) has, with much confidence, asserted the contrary; and it is but fair to let him speak for himself: "J'ajouterois volontiers que la marche didactique et réglée à laquelle notre langue est assujettie la rend plus propre aux sciences; et que par les tours et les inversions que le Grec, le Latin, l'Italien, l'Anglois, se permettent, ces langues sont plus avantageuses pour les lettres: Que nous pourvons mieux qu'aucun autre peuple faire parler l'esprit; et que le bon sens

ed; and the language has assumed a form more systematic, precise, and luminous. The transitions, too, in our best authors, have become more logical, and less dependent on fanciful or verbal associations. If by these means our native tongue has been rendered more unfit for some of the lighter species of writing, it has certainly gained immensely as an instrument of thought, and as a vehicle of

choisiroit la langue Française ; mais que l'Imagination et les passions donneroient la préférence aux langues anciennes et à celles de nos voisins : Qu'il faut parler François dans la société et dans les écoles de Philosophie ; et Grec, Latin, Anglois, dans les chaires et sur le Théâtre : Que notre langue seroit celle de la vérité, si jamais elle revient sur la terre ; et que la Grecque, la Latine, et les autres seroient les langues de la fable et du mensonge. Le François est fait pour instruire, éclairer, et convaincre ; le Grec, le Latin, l'Italien, l'Anglois, pour persuader, émouvoir, et tromper ; parlez Grec, Latin, Italien au peuple, mais parlez François au sage." (*Œuvres de Diderot*, Tome II. pp. 70, 71. Amsterdam, 1772.)

These peculiar excellencies of the French language are ascribed, in part, by Diderot to the study of the Aristotelian Philosophy. (*Ibid.* p. 7.) I do not well see what advantage France should, in this respect, have enjoyed over England ; and since that philosophy fell into disrepute, it will scarcely be alleged that the habits of thinking cultivated by Locke's disciples have been less favourable to a logical rigour of expression than those of any contemporary sect of French metaphysicians.

A later French writer has, with far greater justice, acknowledged the important services rendered to the French language by the gentlemen of the Port Royal Society. "L'Ecole de Port Royal, féconde en penseurs, illustrée par les écrivains les plus purs, par les érudits les plus laborieux du siècle de Louis XIV. eût déjà rendu parmi nous un assez grand service à la philosophie par cela seul qu'elle a puissamment concouru à fixer notre langue, à lui donner ce caractère de précision, de clarté, d'exactitude, qui la rend si favorable aux opérations de l'esprit." (*Hist. Comparée*, &c. Tome II. p. 45.)

Mr. Gibbon also has remarked, how much "the learned Society of Port Royal contributed to establish in France a taste for just reasoning, simplicity of style, and philosophical method." The improvement in all these respects of our English writers, during the same period, is, in my opinion, much more remarkable.

knowledge. May I not also add, that the study of it has been greatly facilitated to foreigners; and that in proportion to its rejection of colloquial anomalies, more durable materials are supplied to the present generation for transmitting their intellectual acquisitions to posterity?

But granting the truth of these reflections, it may still be asked, what is the amount of the discoveries brought to light by the metaphysical speculations of the eighteenth century? Or rather, where are the principles to be found, of which it can be justly said, that they unite the suffrages, not of the *whole*, but even of the *majority* of our present philosophers? The question has been lately put and urged, with no common ability, by a foreign academician.

“The diversity of doctrines (says M. de Bonald) has increased, from age to age, with the number of masters, and with the progress of Knowledge; and Europe, which at present possesses libraries filled with philosophical works, and which reckons up almost as many philosophers as writers; poor in the midst of so much riches, and uncertain with the aid of all its guides, which road it should follow; Europe, the centre and the focus of all the lights of the world, has yet its *philosophy* only in expectation.”¹

In proof of this assertion, the author appeals to the *Comparative History of Philosophical Systems relative to the Principles of Human Knowledge*, by M. de Gerando; and after a variety of acute strictures on the contradictory systems there described, sums up his argument in the following words:

“Thus, the *Comparative History of Philosophical Systems* is nothing else than a *History of the Variations* of philosophical schools, leaving no other impression upon the reader than an insurmountable disgust at all philosophical researches; and a demonstrated conviction of the impossi-

¹ *Recherches Philosophiques*, &c. p. 2. Paris, 1818.

bility of raising an edifice on a soil so void of consistency, and so completely surrounded by the most frightful precipices. About what then are philosophers agreed? What single point have they placed beyond the reach of dispute? Plato and Aristotle inquired, What is science? What is knowledge? And we, so many ages after these fathers of philosophy; we, so proud of the progress of human reason, still continue to repeat the same questions; vainly pursuing the same phantoms which the Greeks pursued two thousand years ago.”¹

In reply to this bold attack on the evidence of the moral sciences, it may suffice to recal to our recollection the state of physical science not more than two centuries ago. The argument of M. de Bonald against the former is, in fact, precisely the same with that ascribed by Xenophon to Socrates against those studies which have immortalized the names of Boyle and Newton; and which, in our own times, have revealed to us all the wonders of the modern chemistry.

¹ *Recherches Philosophiques*, &c. pp. 58, 59.

On the other hand, may it not be asked, if the number of philosophical systems be greater than that of the sects which at present divide the Christian church? The allusion here made to Bossuet’s celebrated *History of the Variations*, shows plainly that the similarity of the two cases had not been overlooked by the ingenious writer; and that the only effectual remedy which, in his opinion, can be applied to either, is to subject once more the reason, both of philosophers and of divines, to the paramount authority of an infallible guide. The conclusion is such as might have been expected from a good Catholic; but I trust that, in this country, it is not likely to mislead many of my readers. Some recent conversions to Popery, however, which, in consequence of views similar to those of M. de Bonald, have taken place among the philosophers of Germany, afford a proof that, in the present political state of Europe, the danger of a temporary relapse into the superstitions of the Church of Rome, how slight soever, ought not to be regarded as altogether visionary. (See *Lectures on the History of Literature*, by Frederick Schlegel, Vol. II. pp. 65, 83, 89, 175, 187. English Translation, Edinburgh.)

Whatever contradictions, therefore, may yet exist in our metaphysical doctrines (and of these contradictions many more than is commonly suspected will be found to be merely verbal), why should we despair of the success of future ages in tracing the laws of the intellectual world, which, though less obvious than those of the material world, are not less the natural and legitimate objects of human curiosity?

Nor is it at all wonderful that the beneficial effects of metaphysical habits of thinking should have been first perceived in political economy; and some other sciences to which, on a superficial view, they may seem to have a very remote relation; and that the rise of the sap in the tree of knowledge should be indicated by the germs at the extremities of the branches before any visible change is discernible in the trunk. The sciences, whose improvement during the last century has been generally acknowledged, are those which are most open to common observation; while the changes which have taken place in the state of metaphysics, have attracted the notice of the few alone who take a deep interest in these abstract pursuits. The swelling of the buds, however, affords a sufficient proof that the roots are sound, and encourages the hope that the growth of the trunk, though more slow, will, in process of time, be equally conspicuous with that of the leaves and blossoms.

I shall close this part of my Dissertation with remarking, that the practical influence of such speculations as those of Locke and of Bacon is to be traced only by comparing, on a large scale, the state of the human mind at distant periods. Both these philosophers appear to have been fully aware (and I know of no philosopher before them of whom the same thing can be said), that the progressive improvement of the species is to be expected less from the culture of the *reasoning powers*, strictly so called, than from the prevention, in early life, of those artificial impressions and associations, by means of which, when once rivetted by habit, the strongest rea-

son may be held in perpetual bondage. These impressions and associations may be likened to the slender threads which fastened Gulliver to the earth ; and they are to be overcome, not by a sudden exertion of intellectual force, but by the gradual effect of good education, in breaking them asunder one by one. Since the revival of letters, seconded by the invention of printing, and by the Protestant Reformation, this process has been incessantly going on, all over the Christian world ; but it is chiefly in the course of the last century that the result has become visible to common observers. How many are the threads which, even in Catholic countries, have been broken by the writings of Locke ! How many still remain to be broken, before the mind of man can recover that moral liberty which, at some future period, it seems destined to enjoy !

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE (A.) p. 19.

It deserves to be remarked, as a circumstance which throws considerable light on the literary history of Scotland during the latter half of the eighteenth century, that, from time immemorial, a continued intercourse had been kept up between Scotland and the Continent. To all who were destined for the profession of law, an education either at a Dutch or French university was considered as almost essential. The case was nearly the same in the profession of physic; and, even among the Scottish clergy, I have conversed, in my youth, with some old men who had studied theology in Holland or in Germany. Of our smaller country gentlemen, resident on their own estates (an order of men which, from various causes, has now, alas! totally vanished), there was scarcely one who had not enjoyed the benefit of a university education; and very few of those who could afford the expence of foreign travel, who had not visited France and Italy. Lord Monboddo somewhere mentions, to the honour of his father, that he sold part of his estate to enable himself (his eldest son) to pursue his studies at the University of Groningen. The constant influx of information and of liberality from abroad, which was thus kept up in Scotland in consequence of the ancient habits and manners of the people, may help to account for the sudden burst of genius, which to a foreigner must seem to have sprung up in this country by a sort of enchantment, soon after the Rebellion of 1745. The great step *then* made was in the art of English composition. In the mathematical sciences, where the graces of writing have no place, Scotland, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, was never, from the time of Neper, left behind by any country in Europe; nor ought it to be forgotten, that the philosophy of Newton was publicly taught by David Gregory at Edinburgh and by his brother James Gregory at St. Andrews, before

it was able to supplant the vortices of Descartes in that very university of which Newton was a member.¹ The case was similar in every other liberal pursuit, where an ignorance of the delicacies of the English tongue was not an insuperable bar to distinction. Even in the study of eloquence, as far as it was attainable in their own vernacular idiom, some of the Scottish pleaders, about the era when the two kingdoms were united, seem ambitiously, and not altogether unsuccessfully, to have formed themselves upon models, which, in modern times, it has been commonly supposed to be more safe to admire than to imitate.² Of the progress made in this part of the island in Metaphysical and Ethical Studies, at a period long prior to that which is commonly considered as the commencement of our literary history, I shall afterwards have occasion to speak. At present, I shall only observe, that it was in the Scottish universities that the philosophy of Locke, as well as that of Newton, was first adopted as a branch of academical education.

NOTE (B.) p. 24.

EXTRACT of a letter from M. Allamand to Mr. Gibbon. (See Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*.)

“Vous avez sans doute raison de dire que les propositions évidentes dont il s'agit, ne sont pas de simples idées, mais des jugemens. Mais ayez aussi la complaisance de reconnaître que M. Locke les alleguant en exemple d'idées qui passent pour innées, et qui ne le sont pas selon lui, s'il y a ici de la méprise, c'est lui qu'il faut relever la-dessus, et non pas moi, qui n'avois autre chose

¹ For this we have the authority of Whiston, the immediate successor of Sir Isaac Newton in the Lucasian Professorship at Cambridge; and of Dr. Reid, who was a nephew of the two Gregorys. “Mr. Gregory had already caused several of his scholars to keep Acts, as we call them, upon several branches of the Newtonian Philosophy; while we at Cambridge, poor wretches, were ignominiously studying the fictitious hypotheses of the Cartesians.” (Whiston's *Memoirs of his own Life*.)

“I have by me” (says Dr. Reid) “a *Thesis* printed at Edinburgh, 1690, by James Gregory, who was at that time Professor of Philosophy at St. Andrews, containing twenty-five positions; the first three relating to logic, and the abuse of it in the Aristotelian and Cartesian philosophy. The remaining twenty-two positions are a compend of Newton's *Principia*. This *Thesis*, as was the custom at that time in the Scottish Universities, was to be defended in a public disputation, by the candidates, previous to their taking their degree.” —(Hutton's *Mathematical Dictionary*.—*Supplement* by Dr. Reid to the article *Gregory*.)

² See a splendid eulogium in the Latin language, by Sir George Mackenzie, on the most distinguished pleaders of his time at the Scottish bar. Every allowance being made for the flattering touches of a friendly hand, his portraits can scarcely be supposed not to have borne a strong and characteristic resemblance to the originals from which they were copied.

à faire qu'à refuter sa manière de raisonner contre l'innéité de ces idées ou jugemens là. D'ailleurs, Monsieur, vous remarquerez, s'il vous plait, que dans cette dispute il s'agit en effet, de savoir si certaines vérités évidentes et communes, et non pas seulement certaines idées simples, sont innées ou non. Ceux qui affirment, ne donnent guère pour exemple d'idées simples qui le soient, que celles de Dieu, de l'unité, et de l'existence; les autres exemples sont pris de propositions completes, que vous appelez jugemens.

“ Mais, dites vous, y aura-t-il donc des jugemens innés? Le jugement est il autre chose qu'un acte de nos facultés intellectuelles dans la comparaison des idées? Le jugement sur les vérités évidentes, n'est il pas une simple vue de ces vérités là, un simple coup d'œil que l'esprit jette sur elles? J'accorde tout cela. *Et de grace, qu'est ce qu' idée? N'est ce pas vue, ou coup d'œil, si vous voulez?* Ceux qui définissent l'idée autrement, ne s'éloignent-ils pas visiblement du sens et de l'intention du mot? Dire que les idées sont les *especes* des choses imprimées dans l'esprit, comme l'image de l'objet sensible est tracée dans l'œil, n'est ce pas jargonner plutôt que définir? Or c'est la faute, qu'ont fait tous les metaphysiciens, et quoique M. Locke l'ait bien sentie, il a mieux aimé se facher contre eux, et tirer contre les girouettes de la place, que s'appliquer à démêler ce galimatias. Que n'a-t-il dit, non seulement il n'y a point d'idées innées dans le sens de ces Messieurs; mais *il n'y a point d'idées du tout dans ce sens là; toute idée est un acte, une vue, un coup d'œil de l'esprit.* Dès-lors demander s'il y a des idées innées, c'est demander s'il y a certaines vérités si évidentes et si communes que tout esprit non stupide puisse naturellement, sans culture et sans maître, sans discussion, sans raisonnement, les reconnoître d'un coup d'œil, et souvent même sans s'apercevoir qu'on jette ce coup d'œil. L'affirmative me paroît incontestable, et selon moi, la question est vidée par là.

“ Maintenant prenez garde, Monsieur, que cette manière d'entendre l'affaire, va au but des partisans des idées innées, tout comme la leur; et par la même contredit M. Locke dans le sien. Car pourquoi voudroit on qu'il y a eu des idées innées? C'est pour en opposer la certitude et l'evidence au doute universal des sceptiques, qui est ruiné d'un seul coup, s'il y a des vérités dont la vue soit nécessaire et naturelle à l'homme. Or vous sentez, Monsieur, que je puis leur dire cela dans ma façon d'expliquer la chose, tout aussi bien que les partisans ordinaires des idées innées dans la leur. Et voilà ce que semble incommoder un peu M. Locke, qui, sans se declarer Pyrrhonien, laisse apercevoir un peu trop de foible pour le Pyrrhonisme, et a beaucoup contribué à le nourrir dans ce siècle. A force de

vouloir marquer les bornes de nos connoissances, ce qui étoit fort nécessaire, il a quelquefois tout mis en bornes."

NOTE (C.) p. 27.

"A DECISIVE proof of this is afforded by the allusions to Locke's doctrines in the dramatic pieces then in possession of the French stage," &c.

In a comedy of Destouches (entitled *La Fausse Agnes*), which must have been written long before the period in question,¹ the heroine, a lively and accomplished girl, supposed to be just arrived from Paris at her father's house in Poitou, is introduced as first assuming the appearance of imbecility, in order to get rid of a disagreeable lover; and, afterwards, as pleading her own cause in a mock trial before an absurd old president and two provincial ladies, to convince them that she is in reality not out of her senses. In the course of her argument on this subject, she endeavours to astonish her judges by an ironical display of her philosophical knowledge; warning them of the extreme difficulty and nicety of the question upon which they were about to pronounce. "Vous voulez juger de moi! mais, pour juger sainement, il faut une grande étendue de connoissance; encore est il bien douteux qu'il y en ait de certaines Avant donc que vous entrepreniez de prononcer sur mon sujet, je demande préalablement que vous examiniez avec moi nos connoissances en general, les degrès de ces connoissances, leur étendue, leur réalité; que nous convenions de ce que c'est que la vérité, et si la vérité se trouve effectivement. Après quoi nous traiterons des propositions universelles, des maximes, des propositions frivoles, et de la foiblesse, ou de la solidité de nos lumières Quelque personnes tiennent pour vérité, que l'homme nâit avec certains principes innées, certaines notions primitives, certains caractères qui sont comme gravés dans son esprit, dès le premier instant de son existence. Pour moi, j'ai longtemps examiné ce sentiment, et j'entreprends de le combattre, de le refuter, de l'aneantir, si vous avez la patience de m'écouter." I have transcribed but a part of this curious pleading; but I presume more than enough to show,

¹ This little piece was first published in 1757, three years after the author's death, which took place in 1754, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. But we are told by D'Alembert, that from the age of sixty, he had renounced, from sentiments of piety, all thoughts of writing for the stage (*Eloge de Destouches*). This carries the date of *all* his dramatic works, at least as far back as 1740. As for Destouches' own familiarity with the writings of Locke, it is easily accounted for by his residence in England from 1717 to 1723, where he remained, for some time after the departure of Cardinal Dubois, as *Chargé d'Affaires*. Voltaire did not visit England till 1727.

that every sentence, and almost every word of it, refers to Locke's doctrines. In the second and third sentences, the titles of the principal chapters in the fourth book of his *Essay* are exactly copied. It was impossible that such a scene should have produced the slightest comic effect, unless the book alluded to had been in very general circulation among the higher orders; I might perhaps add, in much *more* general circulation than it ever obtained among that class of readers in England. At no period, certainly, since it was first published (such is the difference of national manners), could similar allusions have been made to it, or to any other work on so abstract a subject, with the slightest hope of success on the London stage. And yet D'Alambert pronounces *La Fausse Agnes* to be a piece, *pleine de mouvement et de gaieté*.

NOTE (D.) p. 32.

"DESCARTES asserted" (says a very zealous Lockist, M. de Voltaire), "that the soul, at its coming into the body, is informed with the whole series of metaphysical notions; knowing God, infinite space, possessing all abstract ideas; in a word, completely endued with the most sublime lights, which it unhappily forgets at its issuing from the womb.

"With regard to myself" (continues the same writer), "I am as little inclined as Locke could be, to fancy that, some weeks after I was conceived, I was a very learned soul; knowing at that time a thousand things which I forgot at my birth; and possessing, when in the womb (though to no manner of purpose), knowledge which I lost the instant I had occasion for it; and which I have never since been able to recover perfectly."—*Letters concerning the English Nation*. Letter 13.

Whatever inferences may be deducible from some of Descartes's expressions, or from the comments on these expressions by some who assumed the title of Cartesians, I never can persuade myself, that the system of *innate ideas*, as conceived and adopted by him, was meant to give any sanction to the absurdities here treated by Voltaire with such just contempt. In no part of Descartes's works, as far as I have been able to discover, is the slightest ground given for this extraordinary account of his opinions. Nor was Descartes the first person who introduced this language. Long before the date of his works, it was in common use in England; and is to be found in a *Poem* of Sir John Davis, published four years before Descartes was born. See Sec. XXVI. of *The Immortality of the Soul*.) The title of this section expressly asserts, *That there are innate ideas in the soul*.

In one of Descartes's letters, he enters into some explanations with respect to this part of his philosophy, which he complains had been very grossly misunderstood or misrepresented. To the following passage I have no doubt that Locke himself would have subscribed. It strikes myself as so very remarkable, that, in order to attract to it the attention of my readers, I shall submit it to their consideration in an English translation.

"When I said that the idea of God is innate in us, I never meant more than this, that Nature has endowed us with a faculty by which we may know God; but I have never either said or thought, that such ideas had an actual existence, or even that they were *species* distinct from the faculty of thinking. I will even go farther, and assert that nobody has kept at a greater distance than myself from all this trash of scholastic entities, insomuch that I could not help smiling when I read the numerous arguments which Regius has so industriously collected to show that infants have no actual knowledge of God while they remain in the womb. Although the idea of God is so imprinted on our minds, that every person has within himself the faculty of knowing him, it does not follow that there may not have been various individuals who have passed through life without ever making this idea a distinct object of apprehension; and, in truth, they who think they have an idea of a plurality of Gods, have no idea of God whatsoever." (Cartesii, *Epist.* Pars I. *Epist.* xcix.)

After reading this passage from Descartes, may I request of my readers to look back to the extracts in the beginning of this note, from Voltaire's letters? A remark of Montesquieu, occasioned by some strictures hazarded by this lively but very superficial philosopher on the *Spirit of Laws*, is more peculiarly applicable to him when he ventures to pronounce judgment on metaphysical writers: "Quant à Voltaire, il a trop d'esprit pour m'entendre; tous les livres qu'il lit, il les fait, après quoi il approuve ou critique ce qu'il a fait." *Lettre à M. l'Abbé de Guasco.*) The remark is applicable to other critics as well as to Voltaire.

The prevailing misapprehensions with respect to this, and some other principles of the Cartesian metaphysics, can only be accounted for by supposing, that the opinions of Descartes have been more frequently judged of from the glosses of his followers, than from his own works. It seems to have never been sufficiently known to his adversaries, either in France or in England, that, after his philosophy had become fashionable in Holland, a number of Dutch divines, whose opinions differed very widely from his, found it convenient to shelter their own errors under his established name; and that some of them went so far as to avail themselves of his authority in propagating tenets directly opposite to his declared sentiments. Hence a

distinction of the *Cartesians* into the *genuine* and the *pseudo-Cartesians*; and hence an inconsistency in their representations of the metaphysical ideas of their master, which can only be cleared up by a reference (seldom thought of) to his own very concise and perspicuous text.) *Fabricii Bib. Gr.* lib. iii. cap. vi. p. 183. *Heinecc. El. His. Phil.* § cx.)

Many of the objections commonly urged against the *innate ideas* of Descartes, are much more applicable to the *innate ideas* of Leibnitz, whose language concerning them is infinitely more hypothetical and unphilosophical; and sometimes approaches nearly to the enthusiastic theology of Plato and of Cadworth. Nothing in the works of Descartes bears any resemblance, in point of extravagance, to what follows: "Pulcherrima multa sunt Platonis dogmata, esse in divina mente mundum intelligibilem, quem ego quoque vocare soleo regionem idearum; objectum sapientiæ esse τα οντας οντα, substantias nempe simplices, quæ a me *monades* appellantur, et semel existentes semper perstant, *πρωτα δικτινα της ζωης*, id est Deum et Animas, et harum potissimas mentes, producta a Deo simulacra divinitatis. . . . Porro quævis mens, ut recte Plotinus, quendam in se mundum intelligibilem continet, imo mea sententia et hunc ipsum sensibilem sibi repræsentat. Sunt in nobis *semina eorum*, quæ discimus, ideæ nempe, et quæ inde nascuntur, æternæ veritates. Longe ergo præferendæ sunt Platonis *notitiæ innatæ*, quas *reminiscentiæ* nomine velavit, tabulæ rasæ Aristotelis et Lockii, aliorumque recentiorum qui *εξωτερικως* philosophantur." *Leib. Opera*, Tom. II. p. 223.)

Wild and visionary, however, as the foregoing propositions are, if the names of Gassendi and of Hobbes had been substituted instead of those of Aristotle and of Locke, I should have been disposed to subscribe implicitly to the judgment pronounced in the concluding sentence. The metaphysics of Plato, along with a considerable alloy of poetical fiction, has at least the merit of containing a large admixture of important and of ennobling truth; while that of Gassendi and of Hobbes, beside its inconsistency with facts attested, every moment, by our own consciousness, tends directly to level the rational faculties of man with the instincts of the brutes.

In the *Acta Eruditorum* for the year 1684, Leibnitz observes, that "in the case of things which we have never thought of, the *innate ideas* in our minds may be compared to the figure of Hercules in a block of marble." This seems to me to prove, that the difference between him and Locke was rather in appearance than in reality; and that, although he called those ideas *innate* which Locke was at pains to trace to sensation or to reflection, he would have readily granted, that our first knowledge of their existence was coëval with the first impressions made

on our senses by external objects. That this was also the opinion of Descartes is still more evident ; notwithstanding the ludicrous point of view in which Voltaire has attempted to exhibit this part of his system.

NOTE (E.) p. 33.

MR. LOCKE seems to have considered this use of the word *reflection*, as peculiar to himself ; but it is perfectly analogous to the *κινήσεις κυκλικαί* of the Greek philosophers, and to various expressions which occur in the works of John Smith of Cambridge, and of Dr. Cudworth. We find it in a *Poem on the Immortality of the Soul*, by Sir John Davis, Attorney-General to Queen Elizabeth, and probably it is to be met with in English publications of a still earlier date.

All things without, which round about we see,
We seek to know, and have wherewith to do ;
But that whereby we reason, live and be,
Within ourselves we strangers are thereto.

Is it because the mind is like the eye,
Thro' which it gathers knowledge by degrees ;
Whose rays *reflect* not, but spread outwardly ;
Not seeing itself, when other things it sees ?

No, doubtless ; "for the mind can backward cast
Upon herself, her understanding light ;
But she is so corrupt, and so defac'd,
As her own image doth herself affright.

As is the fable of the Lady fair,
Which for her lust was turn'd into a cow ;
When thirsty, to a stream she did repair,
And saw herself transform'd, she wist not how :

At first she startles, then she stands amaz'd ;
At last with terror she from hence doth fly,
And loathes the wat'ry glass wherein she gaz'd,
And shuns it still, altho' for thirst she die.

For even at first *reflection* she espies
Such strange chimeras, and such monsters there ;
Such toys, such antics, and such vanities,
As she retires and shrinks for shame and fear.

I have quoted these verses, chiefly because I think it not improbable that they may have suggested to Gray the following very happy allusion in his fine Fragment *De Principiis Cogitandi* ;

Qualis Hamadryadum quondam si forté sororum
Una, novos peragrans saltus, et devia rura
(Atque illam in viridi suadet procumbere ripa
Fontis pura quies, et opaci frigoris umbra) ;

Dum prona in latices speculi de margine pendet,
 Mirata est subitam venienti occurrere Nympham
 Mox eosdem, quos ipsa, artus, eadem ora gerentem
 Unâ inferre gradus, unâ succedere sylvæ
 Aspicit alludens; seseque agnoscit in undis :
 Sic sensu interno rerum simulacra suarum
 Mens ciet, et proprios observat conscia vultus.

NOTE (F.) p. 61.

THE chief attacks made in England on Locke's *Essay*, during his own life time, were by Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester; John Norris,¹ Rector of Bemerton; Henry Lee, B. D.; and the Reverend M. Lowde (author of a *Discourse concerning the Nature of Man*). Of these four writers, the first is the only one whose objections to Locke are now at all remembered in the learned world; and for this distinction, Stillingfleet is solely indebted (I speak of him here merely as a metaphysician, for in some other departments of study, his merits are universally admitted) to the particular notice which Locke has condescended to take of him, in the Notes incorporated with the later editions of his *Essay*. The only circumstance which renders these Notes worthy of preservation, is the record they furnish of Locke's forbearance and courtesy, in managing a controversy carried on, upon the other side, with so much captiousness and asperity. An Irish bishop, in a letter on this subject to Mr. Molyneux, writes thus: "I read Mr Locke's letter to the Bishop of Worcester with great satisfaction, and am wholly of your opinion, that he has fairly laid the great bishop on his back, but it is with so much gentleness, as if he were afraid not only of hurting him, but even of spoiling or tumbling his clothes."

The work of Lee is entitled *Anti-scepticism*, or Notes upon each Chapter of Mr. Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, with an explanation of all the particulars of which he treats, and in the same order. By Henry Lee, B. D. formerly Fellow of Emanuel College in Cambridge, now Rector of Tichmarsh in Northamptonshire. London, 1702, in folio.

The strictures of this author, which are often acute and sometimes just, are marked throughout with a fairness and candour rarely to be met with in controversial writers. It will appear remarkable to modern critics that he lays particular stress upon the charms of Locke's style, among the other excellencies which had conspired to recommend his work to public favour. "The celebrated author of the *Essay on Human Understanding* has all the advantages desirable to recommend it to the inquisi-

¹ Of this person, who was a most ingenious and original thinker, I shall have occasion afterwards to speak.

tive genius of this age; an avowed pretence to new methods of discovering truth and improving learning; an unusual coherence in the several parts of his scheme; a singular clearness in his reasonings; and *above all*, a natural elegance of style; an unaffected beauty in his expressions; a just proportion and tuneable cadence in all his periods." (See the *Epistle Dedicatory*.)

NOTE (G.) p. 67.

For the information of some of my readers, it may be proper to observe, that the word *influx* came to be employed to denote *the action* of body and soul on each other, in consequence of a prevailing theory which supposed that this action was carried on by something intermediate (whether material or immaterial was not positively decided) *flowing* from the one substance to the other. It is in this sense that the word is understood by Leibnitz, when he states as an insurmountable objection to the theory of *influx*, that "it is impossible to conceive either material particles or immaterial qualities to pass from body to mind, or from mind to body."

Instead of the term *influx*, that of *influence* came gradually to be substituted by our English writers; but the two words were originally synonymous, and were used indiscriminately as late as the time of Sir Matthew Hale. (See his *Primitive Origination of Mankind*.)

In Johnson's *Dictionary*, the primitive and radical meaning assigned to the word *influence* (which he considers as of French extraction) is "the power of the celestial aspects operating upon terrestrial bodies and affairs;" and in the *Enclopædia* of Chambers, it is defined to be "a quality supposed to *flow* from the bodies of the stars, either with their heat or light, to which astrologers vainly attribute all the events which happen on the earth." To this astrological use of the word Milton had plainly a reference in that fine expression of his *L'Allegro*,

"Store of ladies, whose bright eyes
"Rain influence."¹

It is a circumstance worthy of notice, that a word thus originating in the dreams of astrologers and schoolmen, should now, in our language, be appropriated almost exclusively to

¹The explanation of the word *Influence*, given in the *Dictionary* of the French Academy, accords perfectly with the tenor of the above remarks. "Vertu qui, suivant les Astrologues, découle deul Astres sur les corps sublunaires."

politics. "Thus" (says Blackstone) "are the electors of one branch of the legislature secured from any undue *influence* from either of the other two, and from all external violence and compulsion; but the greatest danger is that in which themselves co-operate by the infamous practice of bribery and corruption." And again, "The crown has gradually and imperceptibly gained almost as much in *influence* as it has lost in prerogative."

In all these cases, there will be found at bottom one common idea, the existence of some secret and mysterious connection between two things, of which connection it is conceived to be impossible or unwise to trace what Bacon calls the *latens processus*.

NOTE (H.) p. 70.

AFTER these quotations from Locke, added to those which I have already produced from the same work, the reader may judge of the injustice done to him by Leibnitz, in the first sentence of his correspondence with Clarke.

"Il semble que la religion naturelle même s'affoiblit extrêmement. Plusieurs font les ames corporelles; d'autres font Dieu lui-même corporel.

"M. Locke et ses sectateurs, doutent au moins, si les ames ne sont matérielles, et naturellement perissables."

Dr. Clarke, in his reply to this charge, admits that "*some* parts of Locke's writings may justly be suspected as intimating his doubts whether the soul be immaterial or no, but herein (he adds) he has been followed only by some Materialists, enemies to the mathematical principles of philosophy; and who approve little or nothing in Mr. Locke's writings, but his errors."

To those who have studied with care the *whole* writings of Locke, the *errors* here alluded to will appear in a very venial light when compared with the general spirit of his philosophy. Nor can I forbear to remark farther on this occasion, that supposing Locke's *doubts* concerning the immateriality of the soul to have been as real as Clarke seems to have suspected, this very circumstance would only reflect the greater lustre on the soundness of his *logical* views concerning the proper method of studying the mind;—in the prosecution of which study, he has adhered much more systematically than either Descartes or Leibnitz, to the exercise of *reflection*, as the sole medium for ascertaining the internal phenomena; describing, at the same time, these phenomena in the simplest and most rigorous terms which our language affords, and avoiding, in a far greater degree than any of his predecessors, any attempt to explain them

by analogies borrowed from the perceptions of the external senses.

I before observed, that Leibnitz greatly underrated Locke as a metaphysician. It is with regret I have now to mention, that Locke has by no means done justice to the splendid talents and matchless erudition of Leibnitz. In a letter to his friend Mr. Molyneux, dated in 1697, he expresses himself thus: "I see you and I agree pretty well concerning Mr. Leibnitz; and this sort of fiddling makes me hardly avoid thinking, that he is not that very great man as has been talked of him." And in another letter, written in the same year to the same correspondent, after referring to one of Leibnitz's Memoirs in the *Acta Eruditorum* (De primæ Philosophiæ Emendatione), he adds, "From whence I only draw this inference, that even great parts will not master any subject without great thinking, and that even the largest minds have but narrow swallows."

Let me add, that in my quotations from English writers, I adhere scrupulously to their own phraseology, in order to bring under the eye of my readers, specimens of English composition at different periods of our history. I must request their attention to this circumstance, as some expressions in the former part of this Dissertation, which have been censured as Scotticisms, occur in Extracts from authors who, in all probability, never visited this side of the Tweed.

NOTE (I.) p. 32.

AFTER studying, with all possible diligence, what Leibnitz has said of his *monads* in different parts of his works, I find myself quite incompetent to annex any precise idea to the word as he has employed it. I shall, therefore, aim at nothing more in this note, but to collect, into as small a compass as I can, some of his most intelligible attempts to explain its meaning.

"A substance is a thing capable of action. It is simple or compounded. A simple substance is that which has no parts. A compound substance is an aggregate of simple substances or of *monads*.

"Compounded substances, or bodies, are multitudes. Simple substances, lives, souls, spirits, are units.¹ Such simple substances must exist every where; for without simple substances there could be no compounded ones. All nature therefore is full of life." (Tom. II. p. 32.)

"*Monads*, having no parts, are neither extended, figured, nor divisible. They are the real *atoms* of nature, or, in other words, the elements of things." (Tom. II. p. 20.)

¹ "Les substances simples, les vies, les âmes, les esprits, sont des unités."

(It must not, however, be imagined, that the *monads* of Leibnitz have any resemblance to what are commonly called *atoms* by philosophers. On the contrary, he says expressly, that "*monads* are not atoms of *matter*, but atoms of *substances*;—real units, which are the first principles in the composition of things, and the last elements in the analysis of substances;—of which principles or elements, what we call *bodies* are only the *phenomena*."—(Tom. II. pp 53. 325.)

In another passage we are told, that "a *monad* is not a *material* but a *formal* atom, it being impossible for a thing to be at once material, and possessed of a real unity and indivisibility. It is necessary, therefore" (says Leibnitz), "to revive the obsolete doctrine of *substantial forms* (the essence of which consists in *force*), separating it, however, from the various abuses to which it is liable."—(*Ibid.* p. 50.)

"Every *monad* is a living mirror, representing the universe, according to its particular point of view, and subject to as regular laws as the universe itself."

"Every *monad*, with a particular body, makes a living substance."

"The knowledge of every *soul* (*ame*) extends to infinity, and to all things; but this knowledge is confused. As a person walking on the margin of the sea, and listening to its roar, hears the noise of each individual wave of which the whole noise is made up, but without being able to distinguish one sound from another, in like manner, our confused perceptions are the result of the impressions made upon us by the whole universe. The case (he adds) is the same with each *monad*."

"As for the reasonable soul or mind (*l'esprit*), there is something in it more than in the *monads*, or even than in those souls which are simple. It is not only a mirror of the universe of created things, but an image of the Deity. Such minds are capable of reflected acts, and of conceiving what is meant by the words *I*, *substance*, *monad*, *soul*, *mind*; in a word, of conceiving *things and truths* unconnected with matter; and it is this which renders us capable of science and of demonstrative reasoning.

"What becomes of these *souls* or *forms*, on the death of the animal? There is no alternative (replies Leibnitz) but to conclude, that not only the soul is preserved, but that the *animal also with its organical machine* continues to exist, although the destruction of its grosser parts has reduced it to a smallness as invisible to our eyes as it was before the moment of conception. Thus neither animals nor souls perish at death; nor is there such a thing as *death*, if that word be understood with rigorous and metaphysical accuracy. The soul never quits completely the body with which it is united, nor does it pass

from one body into another with which it had no connection before ; a *metamorphosis* takes place, but there is no *metempsychosis*.”—(Tom. II. pp. 51, 52.)

On this part of the Leibnitzian system, D’Alembert remarks, that it proves nothing more than that the author had perceived better than any of his predecessors, the impossibility of forming a distinct idea of the nature of *matter* ; a subject, however (D’Alembert adds), on which the theory of the monads does not seem calculated to throw much light. I would rather say (without altogether denying the justness of D’Alembert’s criticism), that this theory took its rise from the author’s vain desire to explain the nature of *forces* ; in consequence of which he suffers himself perpetually to be led astray from those *sensible effects* which are exclusively the proper objects of *physics*, into conjectures concerning their *efficient causes*, which are altogether placed beyond the reach of our research.

NOTE (K.) p. 89.

THE *metaphysical* argument advanced by the Leibnitzians in proof of the *law of continuity* has never appeared to me to be satisfactory. “If a body at rest (it has been said) begins, *per saltum*, to move with any finite velocity, then this body must be at the same indivisible instant in two different states, that of rest and of motion, which is impossible.”¹

As this reasoning, though it relates to a *physical fact*, is itself wholly of a *metaphysical* nature ; and as the inference deduced from it has been generalized into a *LAW*, supposed to extend to all the various branches of human knowledge, it is not altogether foreign to our present subject briefly to consider how far it is demonstratively conclusive, in this simplest of all its possible applications.

¹ “Si toto tempore (says Father Boscovich, speaking of the Law of Continuity in the Collision of Bodies) ante contactum subsequentis corporis superficies antecedens habuit 12 gradus velocitatis, et sequenti 9, saltu facto momentaneo ipso initio contactus ; in ipso momento ea tempora dirimente debuissent habere et 12 et 9 simul, quod est absurdum. Duas enim velocitates simul habere corpus non potest.”—*Theoria Phil. Nat.* &c.

Boscovich, however, it is to be observed, admits the existence of the Law of Continuity in the phenomena of Motion alone (§ 143), and rejects it altogether in things co-existent with each other (§ 142). In other cases, he says, Nature does not observe the Law of Continuity with mathematical accuracy, but only *affects it* ; by which expression he seems to mean, that, where she is guilty of a *saltus*, she aims at making it as moderate as possible. The expression is certainly deficient in metaphysical precision ; but it is not unworthy of attention, inasmuch as it affords a proof, that Boscovich did not (with the Leibnitzians) conceive Nature, or the Author of Nature, as obeying an *irresistible necessity* in observing or not observing the Law of Continuity.

On the above argument, then, I would remark, 1. That the ideas both of *rest* and of *motion*, as well as the more general idea conveyed by the word *state*, all of them necessarily involve the idea of *time* or *duration*; and, consequently, a body cannot be said to be in a *state* either of rest or of motion, at an *indivisible* instant. Whether the body be supposed (as in the case of motion) to *change* its place from one instant to another; or to *continue* (as in that of rest) for an instant in the same place, the idea of some finite portion of time will, on the slightest reflection, be found to enter as an essential element into our conception of the physical fact.

2. Although it certainly would imply a contradiction to suppose a body to be in two different *states* at the same instant, there does not appear to be any inconsistency in asserting that an indivisible instant may form the limit between a state of rest and a state of motion. Suppose one half of this page to be painted white, and the other black, it might, I apprehend, be said with the most rigorous propriety, that the transition from the one colour to the other was made *per saltum*; nor do I think it would be regarded as a valid objection to this phraseology, to represent it as one of its implied consequences, that the mathematical line which forms their common limit, must at once be both black and white. It seems to me quite impossible to elude the force of this reasoning, without having recourse to the existence of something intermediate between *rest* and *motion*, which does not partake of the nature of either.

Is it conceivable that a body can exist in any *state* which does not fall under one or other of the two predicaments, rest or motion? If this question should be answered in the negative, will it not follow that the transition from one of these *states* to the other must, of necessity, be made *per saltum*, and must consequently violate the supposed law of continuity? Indeed, if such a law existed, how could a body at rest *begin* to move, or a body in motion come to a state of rest?

But farther, when it is said that "it is impossible for a body to have its state changed from motion to rest, or from rest to motion, without passing through all the intermediate degrees of velocity," what are we to understand by the *intermediate degrees of velocity between rest and motion*? Is not *every* velocity, how small soever, a *finite* velocity; and does it not differ as essentially from a state of rest, as the velocity of light?

It is observed by Mr. Playfair (*Second Dissertation*, Part I. p. 70), that Galileo was the first who maintained the existence of the *law of continuity*, and who made use of it as a principle in his

reasonings on the phenomena of motion. Mr. Playfair, however, with his usual discrimination and correctness, ranks this among the *mechanical* discoveries of Galileo. Indeed, it does not appear that it was at all regarded by Galileo (as it avowedly was by Leibnitz) in the light of a metaphysical and necessary law, which could not by any possibility be violated in any of the phenomena of motion. It was probably first suggested to him by the diagram which he employed to *demonstrate*, or rather to *illustrate*, the uniformly accelerated motion of falling bodies;¹ and the numberless and beautiful exemplifications of the same law which occur in *pure geometry*, sufficiently account for the disposition which so many Mathematicians have shown to extend it to all those branches of physics which admit of a mathematical consideration.

My late illustrious friend, who, to his many other great and amiable qualities, added the most perfect fairness and candour in his inquiries after truth, has, in the posthumous fragment which has already appeared in this *Supplement*, expressed himself with considerably greater scepticism concerning the law of continuity, than in his *Outlines of Natural Philosophy*. In that work he pronounced the metaphysical argument, employed by Leibnitz to prove its *necessity*, "to be conclusive." (Sect. VI. § 99, b.) In the second part of his *Dissertation* (p. 34), he writes thus on the same subject :

"Leibnitz considered this principle as known *a priori*, because, if any *saltus* were to take place, that is, if any change were to happen without the intervention of time, the thing changed must be in two different conditions at the same individual instant, which is obviously impossible. Whether this reasoning be quite satisfactory or no, the conformity of the law to the facts generally observed cannot but entitle it to great authority in judging of the explanations and theories of natural phenomena."

The phrase, *Law of Continuity*, occurs repeatedly in the course of the correspondence between Leibnitz and John Bernou-

¹ Descartes seems, from his correspondence with Mersenne, to have been much puzzled with Galileo's reasonings concerning the descent of falling bodies; and in alluding to it, has, on different occasions, expressed himself with an indecision and inconsistency of which few instances occur in his works (Vide *Cartesii Epist.* Pars II. Epist. xxxiv. xxxv. xxxvii. xci.) His doubts on this point will appear less surprising, if compared with a passage in the article in *Méchanique* in D'Alembert's *Elémens de Philosophie*. "Tous les philosophes paroissent convenir, que la vitesse avec laquelle les corps qui tombent commencent à se mouvoir est absolument nulle," &c. &c. (See his *Mélanges*, Tom. IV. p. 219, 220.)

illi, and appears to have been *first* used by Leibnitz himself. The following passage contains some interesting particulars concerning the history of this law : “ *Lex Continuitatis*, cum usque adeo sit rationi et naturæ consentanea, et usum habeat tam late patentem, mirum tamen est eam a nemine (quantum recorder) antea adhibitam fuisse. Mentionem ejus aliquam feceram olim in *Nóvellis Reipublicæ Literariæ* (Juillet, 1687, p. 744), occasione collatiunculæ cum Malebranchio, qui ideo meis considerationibus persuasus, suam de legibus motus in Inquisitione Veritatis expositam doctrinam postea mutavit; quod brevi libello edito testatus est, in quo ingenue occasionem mutationis exponit. Sed tamen paullo promptior, quam par erat, fuit in novis legibus constituendis in eodem libello, antequam mecum communicasset; nec tantum in veritatem, sed etiam in illam ipsam Legem Continuitatis, etsi minus aperte, denuo tamen impegit; quod nolui viro optimo objicere, ne viderer ejus existimationi detrudere velle.”—*Epist. Leibnit. ad Joh. Bernouilli*, 1697.

From one of John Bernouilli's letters to Leibnitz, it would appear that he had himself a conviction of the truth of this law, before he had any communication with Leibnitz upon the subject.

“ Placet tuum criterium pro examinandis regulis motuum, quod *legem continuitatis* vocas; est enim per se evidens, et velut a natura nobis inditum, quod evanescente inæqualitate hypothesium, evanescere quoque debeant inæqualitates eventuum. Hinc multoties non satis mirari potui, qui fieri potuerit, ut tam incongruas, tam absonas, et tam manifeste inter se pugnantes regulas, excepta sola prima, potuerit condere Cartesius, vir alias summi ingenii. Mihi videtur vel ab infante falsitatem illarum palpari posse, ea quod ubique saltus ille, naturæ adeo inimicus, manifeste nimis elucet.” (*Epist. Bernouilli ad Leib.* 1696. Vide Leibnitzii et Jo. Bernouilli *Comm. Epist.* 2 vols 4to, Lausannæ et Genève, 1745.)

NOTE (L.) p. 90.

MAIS il restoit encore la plus grande question, de ce que ces âmes ou ces formes deviennent par la mort de l'animal, ou par la destruction de l'individu de la substance organisé. Et c'est ce qui embarrasse le plus; d'autant qu'il paroît peu raisonnable que les âmes restent inutilement dans un chaos de matière confuse. Cela m'a fait juger enfin qu'il n'y avoit qu'un seul parti raisonnable à prendre; et c'est celui de la conservation non seulement de l'âme, mais encore de l'animal même, et de la machine organique; quoique la destruction des parties grossières l'ait réduit à une petitesse qui n'échappe pas moins à nos sens

que celle où il étoit avant que de naître. (Leib. *Op.* Tom. II. p. 51.)

.... Des personnes fort exactes aux expériences se sont déjà aperçues de nôtre tems,¹ qu'on peut douter, si jamais un animal tout à fait nouveau est produit, et si les animaux tout en vie ne sont déjà en petit avant la conception dans les semences aussi bien que les plantes. Cette doctrine étant posée, il sera raisonnable de juger, que ce qui ne commence pas de vivre ne cesse pas de vivre non plus; et que la mort, comme la génération, n'est que la transformation du même animal qui est tantôt augmenté, et tantôt diminué. (*Ibid.* pp. 42, 43.)

.... Et puisq' ainsi il n'y a point de première naissance ni de génération entièrement nouvelle de l'animal, il s'ensuit qu'il n'y en aura point d'extinction finale, ni de mort entière prise à la rigueur métaphysique; et que, par conséquent, au lieu de la transmigration des âmes, il n'y a qu'une transformation d'un même animal, selon que les organes sont pliés différemment, et plus ou moins développés. (*Ibid.* p. 52.)

Quant à la Métempsychose, je crois que l'ordre ne l'admet point il veut que tout soit explicable distinctement, et que rien ne se fasse par saut. Mais le passage de l'âme d'un corps dans l'autre seroit un saut étrange et inexplicable. Il se fait toujours dans l'animal ce qui se fait présentement: C'est que le corps est dans un changement continuel, comme un fleuve, et ce que nous appellons génération ou mort, n'est qu'un changement plus grand et plus prompt qu'à l'ordinaire, tel que seroit le saut ou la cataracte d'une rivière. Mais ces sauts ne sont pas absolus et tels que je desaprouve; comme seroit celui d'un corps qui iroit d'un lieu à un autre sans passer par le milieu. *Et de tels sauts ne sont pas seulement défendus dans les mouvemens, mais encore dans tout ordre des choses ou des vérités.*—The sentences which follow afford a proof of what I have elsewhere remarked, how much the mind of Leibnitz was misled, in the whole of this metaphysical theory, by habits of thinking formed in early life, amidst the hypothetical abstractions of pure geometry; a prejudice (or *idol of the mathematical den*) to which the most important errors of his philosophy might, without much difficulty, be traced.—“Or comme dans une ligne de géométrie il y a certains points distingués, qu'on appelle sommets, points d'inflexion, points de rebroussement, ou autrement; et comme il y en a des lignes qui en ont une infinité, c'est ainsi qu'il faut concevoir dans la vie d'un animal ou d'une personne les tems d'un changement extraordinaire, qui ne laissent pas d'être dans la règle générale; de même que les points distin-

¹ The experiments here referred to are the observations of Swammerdam, Malpighi, and Lewenhoeck.

gués dans la courbe se peuvent determiner par sa nature generale ou son équation. On peut toujours dire d'un animal *c'est tout comme ici*, la difference n'est que du plus ou moins." (Tom. V. p. 18.)

NOTE (M.) p. 96.

THE praise which I have bestowed on this Memoir renders it necessary for me to take some notice of a very exceptionable proposition which is laid down in the first paragraph, as a fundamental maxim,—that "all proper names were at first Appellatives;" a proposition so completely at variance with the commonly received opinions among later philosophers, that it seems an object of some curiosity to inquire, how far it is entitled to plead in its favour the authority of Leibnitz. Since the writings of Condillac and of Smith, it has, so far as I know, been universally acknowledged, that, if there be any one truth in the *Theoretical History* of Language, which we are entitled to assume as an incontrovertible fact, it is the direct contrary of the above proposition. Indeed, to assert that all proper names were at first appellatives, would appear to be nearly an absurdity of the same kind as to maintain, that *classes* of objects existed before *individual* objects had been brought into being.

When Leibnitz, however, comes to explain his idea more fully, we find it to be something very different from what his words literally imply; and to amount only to the trite and indisputable observation, That, in simple and primitive languages, all proper names (such as the names of persons, mountains, places, of residence, &c.) are descriptive or significant of certain prominent and characteristical features, distinguishing them from other objects of the same class;—a fact, of which a large proportion of the surnames still in use, all over Europe, as well as the names of mountains, villages, and rivers, when traced to their primitive roots, afford numerous and well known exemplifications.

Not that the proposition, even when thus explained, can be assumed as a general maxim. It holds, indeed, in many cases, as the Celtic and the Saxon languages abundantly testify, in our own island; but it is true only under certain limitations, and it is perfectly consistent with the doctrine delivered on this subject by the greater part of philologers for the last fifty years.

In the history of language, nothing is more remarkable, than the aversion of men to coin words out of unmeaning and arbitrary sounds; and their eagerness to avail themselves of the stores already in their possession, in order to give utterance

to their thoughts on the new topics, which the gradual extension of their experience is continually bringing within the circle of their knowledge. Hence Metaphors, and other figures of speech; and hence the various changes which words undergo, in the way of amplification, diminution, composition, and the other transformations of elementary terms which fall under the notice of the etymologist. Were it not, indeed, for this strong and universal bias of our nature, the vocabulary of every language would, in process of time, become so extensive and unwieldy, as to render the acquisition of one's mother tongue a task of immense difficulty, and the acquisition of a dead or foreign tongue next to impossible. It is needless to observe, how immensely these tasks are facilitated by that etymological system which runs, more or less, through every language; and which everywhere proceeds on certain analogical principles, which it is the business of the practical grammarian to reduce to general rules, for the sake of those who wish to speak or to write it with correctness.

In attempting thus to trace backwards the steps of the mind towards the commencement of its progress, it is evident, that we must at last arrive at a set of elementary and primitive roots, of which no account can be given, but the arbitrary choice of those who first happened to employ them. It is to this *first* stage in the infancy of language, that Mr. Smith's remarks obviously relate; whereas the proposition of Leibnitz, which gave occasion to this note, as obviously relates to its subsequent stages, when the language is beginning to assume somewhat of a regular form, by compositions and other modifications of the materials previously collected.

From these slight hints it may be inferred, 1st, That the proposition of Leibnitz, although it may seem, from the very inaccurate and equivocal terms in which it is expressed, to stand in direct opposition to the doctrine of Smith, was really meant by the author to state a fact totally unconnected with the question under Smith's consideration. 2dly, That even in the sense in which it was understood by the author, it fails entirely, when extended to that *first* stage in the infancy of language, to which the introductory paragraphs in Mr. Smith's discourse are exclusively confined.

NOTE (N.) p. 99.

“JE viens de recevoir une lettre d'un Prince Regnant de l'Empire, ou S. A. me marque avoir vu deux fois ce printems à la dernière foire de Leipsig et examiné avec soin, un chien qui parle. Ce chien a prononcé distinctment plus de trente mots,

repondant même assez à propos à son maître: il a aussi prononcé tout l'alphabet excepté les lettres, m, n, x." (Leib. *Opera*, Tom. V. p. 72.)

Thus far the fact rests upon the authority of the German prince alone. But from a passage in the *History of the Academy of Sciences*, for the year 1706, it appears that Leibnitz had himself seen and heard the dog. What follows is transcribed from a report of the Academy upon a letter from Leibnitz to the Abbé de St. Pierre, giving the details of this extraordinary occurrence.

"Sans un garant tel que M. Leibnitz, témoin oculaire, nous n'aurions pas la hardiesse de rapporter, qu'auprès de Zeitz dans la Misnie, il y a un chien qui parle. C'est un chien de Paysan, d'une figure des plus communes, et de grandeur mediocre. Un jeune enfant lui entendit pousser quelques sons qu'il crut ressembler à des mots Allemands, et sur cela se mit en tête de lui apprendre à parler. Le maître, qui n'avoit rien de mieux à faire, n'y épargna pas le tems ni ses peines, et heureusement le disciple avoit des dispositions qu'il eut été difficile de trouver dans un autre. Enfin, au bout de quelques années, le chien sut prononcer environ une trentaine de mots: de ce nombre sont *The*, *Caffé*, *Chocolat*, *Assemblée*, mots François, qui ont passé dans l'Allemand tels qu'ils sont. Il est à remarquer, que le chien avoit bien trois ans quand il fut mis à l'école. Il ne parle que par écho, c'est à dire, après que son maître a prononcé un mot; et il semble, qu'il ne repète que par force et malgré lui, quoiqu'on ne le maltraite pas. Encore une fois, M. Leibnitz l'a vu et entendu."

(Exposé d'une lettre de M. Leibnitz à l'Abbé de St. Pierre sur un chien qui parle.) "Cet exposé de la lettre de M. Leibnitz se trouve dans l'Histoire de l'Academie des Sciences, Année 1706. Ce sont les Auteurs de l'Histoire de l'Academie qui parlent." (Leib. *Opera*, Vol. II. p. 180. P. II.)

May not all the circumstances of the above story be accounted for, by supposing the master of the dog to have possessed that peculiar species of imitative power which is called *Ventriloquism*? Mathews, I have no doubt, would find little difficulty in managing such a deception, so as to impose on the senses of any person who had never before witnessed any exhibition of the same kind.

NOTE (O.) p. 100.

WHEN I speak in favourable terms of the *Philosophical Spirit*, I hope none of my readers will confound it with the spirit of that false philosophy, which, by unhinging every rational principle

of belief, seldom fails to unite in the same characters the extremes of scepticism and of credulity. It is a very remarkable fact, that the same period of the eighteenth century, and the same part of Europe which were most distinguished by the triumphs of Atheism and Materialism, were also distinguished by a greater number of visionaries and impostors than had ever appeared before, since the revival of letters. Nor were these follies confined to persons of little education. They extended to men of the highest rank, and to many individuals of distinguished talents. Of this the most satisfactory proofs might be produced; but I have room here only for one short quotation. It is from the pen of the Duc de Levis, and relates to the celebrated Mareschal de Richelieu, on whom Voltaire has lavished so much of his flattery. "Ce dont je suis positivement certain, c'est que cet homme spirituel (Le Mareschal de Richelieu) étoit superstitieux et qu'il croyoit aux prédictions des astrologues et autres sottises de cet espèce. Je l'ai vu refusant à Versailles d'aller faire sa cour au fils aîné de Louis XVI. en disant sérieusement, *qu'il savoit* que cet enfant n'étoit point destiné au trône. Cette crédulité superstitieuse, générale pendant la ligue, étoit encore très commune sous la régence lorsque le Duc de Richelieu entra dans le monde; par la plus bizarre des inconséquences, elle s'allioit très bien avec la plus grande impiété, et la plupart des materialistes croyoient aux *esprits*; aujourd'hui, ce genre de folie est très rare; mais beaucoup de gens, qui se moquent des astrologues, croient à des prédictions d'une autre espèce." (*Souvenirs et Portraits*, par M. de Levis, à Paris, 1813.)

Some extraordinary facts of the same kind are mentioned in the *Memoirs of the Marquis de Bouillé*. According to him, Frederic the Great himself was not free from this sort of superstition.

NOTE (P.) p. 101.

THE following estimate of Leibnitz, considered in comparison with his most distinguished contemporaries, approaches, on the whole, very nearly to the truth; although some doubts may be entertained about the justness of the decision in the last clause of the sentence. "Leibnitz, aussi hardi que Descartes, aussi subtil que Bayle, peut-être moins profond que Newton, et moins sage que Locke, mais seul universel entre tous ces grand hommes, paroît avoir embrassé le domaine de la raison dans toute son étendue, et avoir contribué le plus à répandre cet esprit philosophique que fait aujourd'hui la gloire de notre siècle." (Bailly, *Eloge de Leibnitz*.)

I have mentioned in the text only a part of the learned labours of Leibnitz. It remains to be added, that he wrote also on various subjects connected with chemistry, medicine, botany, and natural history; on the philosophy and language of the Chinese; and on numberless other topics of subordinate importance. The philological discussions and etymological collections, which occupy so large a space among his works, would (even if he had produced nothing else) have been no inconsiderable memorials of the activity and industry of his mind.

Manifold and heterogeneous as these pursuits may at first appear, it is not difficult to trace the thread by which his curiosity was led from one of them to another. I have already remarked a connection of the same sort between his different metaphysical and theological researches; and it may not be altogether uninteresting to extend the observation to some of the subjects enumerated in the foregoing paragraph.

The studies by which he first distinguished himself in the learned world (I pass over that of jurisprudence,¹ which was imposed on him by the profession for which he was destined) were directed to the antiquities of his own country; and more particularly to those connected with the history of the House of Brunswick. With this view he ransacked, with an unexampled industry, the libraries, monasteries, and other archives, both of Germany and of Italy; employing in this ungrateful drudgery several of the best and most precious years of his life. Mortified, however, to find how narrow the limits are, within which the range of written records is confined, he struck out for himself and his successors a new and unexpected light, to guide them through the seemingly hopeless darkness of remote ages. This light was the study of etymology, and of the affinities of different tongues in their primitive roots;—a light at first faint and glimmering, but which, since his time, has continued to increase in brightness, and is likely to do so more and more as the world grows older. It is pleasing to see his curiosity on this subject expand, from the names of the towns and rivers and mountains in his neighbourhood, till it reached to China and other regions in the East; leading him, in the last result, to some general conclusions concerning the origin of the different tribes of our species, approximating very nearly to those which have been since drawn from a much more extensive range of *data* by Sir William Jones, and other philologers of the same school.

¹ Bailly, in his *Eloge on Leibnitz*, speaks of him in terms of the most enthusiastic praise, as a philosophical jurist, and as a man fitted to become the legislator of the human race. To me, I must own, it appears, that there is no part of his writings in which he discovers less of his characteristic originality, than where he professes to treat of the law of nature. On these occasions, how inferior does he appear to Grotius, not to speak of Montesquieu and his disciples!

As an additional light for illustrating the antiquities of Germany, he had recourse to natural history; examining, with a scientific eye, the shells and other marine bodies everywhere to be found in Europe, and the impressions of plants and fishes (some of them unknown in this part of the world) which are distinctly legible, even by the unlettered observer, on many of our fossils. In entering upon this research, as well as on the former, he seems to have had a view to Germany alone; on the state of which (he tells us), prior to all historical documents, it was his purpose to prefix a discourse to his History of the House of Brunswick. But his imagination soon took a bolder flight, and gave birth to his *Protogæa*;—a dissertation which (to use his own words) had for its object “to ascertain the original face of the earth, and to collect the vestiges of its earliest history from the monuments which nature herself has left of her successive operations on its surface.” It is a work, which, wild and extravagant as it may now be regarded, is spoken of by Buffon with much respect; and is considered by Cuvier as the ground-work of Buffon’s own system on the same subject.

In the connection which I have now pointed out between the Historical, the Philological, and the Geological speculations of Leibnitz, Helvetius might have fancied that he saw a new exemplification of the *law of continuity*; but the true light in which it ought to be viewed, is as a faithful picture of a philosophical mind emancipating itself from the trammels of local and conventional details, and gradually rising from subject to subject, till it embraces in its survey those nobler inquiries which, sooner or later, will be equally interesting to every portion of the human race.¹

¹ In the above note, I have said nothing of Leibnitz’s project of a philosophical language, founded on an alphabet of Human Thoughts, as he has nowhere given us any hint of the principles on which he intended to proceed in its formation, although he has frequently alluded to the practicability of such an invention in terms of extraordinary confidence. (For some remarks on these passages in his works, see *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. 143, *et seq.*) In some of Leibnitz’s expressions on this subject, there is a striking resemblance to those of Descartes in one of his letters. (See the preliminary discourse prefixed to the Abbé Emery’s *Pensées de Descartes*, p. xiv. *et seq.*)

In the ingenious essay of Michaelis *On the Influence of Opinions on Language, and of Language on Opinions* (which obtained the prize from the Royal Society of Berlin in 1759,) there are some very acute and judicious reflections on the impossibility of carrying into effect, with any advantage, such a project as these philosophers had in view. The author’s argument on this point seems to me decisive, in the present state of human knowledge; but who can pretend to fix a limit to the possible attainments of our posterity!

NOTE (Q.) p. 112.

OF Locke's affectionate regard for Collins, notwithstanding the contrariety of their opinions on some questions of the highest moment, there exist many proofs in his letters, published by M. Des Maizeaux. In one of these, the following passage is remarkable. It is dated from Oates in Essex, 1703, about a year before Locke's death.

"You complain of a great many defects; and that very complaint is the highest recommendation I could desire to make me love and esteem you, and desire your friendship. And if I were now setting out in the world, I should think it my great happiness to have such a companion as you, who had a true relish for truth; would in earnest seek it with me; from whom I might receive it undisguised; and to whom I might communicate what I thought true freely. Believe it, my good friend, to love truth for truth's sake, is the principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues; and, if I mistake not, you have as much of it as ever I met with in any body. What, then, is there wanting to make you equal to the best; a friend for any one to be proud of?" The whole of Locke's letters to Collins are highly interesting and curious; more particularly *that* which he desired to be delivered to him after his own death.

From the general tenor of these letters, it may be inferred, that Collins had never let Locke fully into the secret of those pernicious opinions which he was afterwards at so much pains to disseminate.

NOTE (R.) p. 115.

IN addition to the account of Spinoza given in Bayle, some interesting particulars of his history may be learnt from a small volume, entitled, *La Vie de B. de Spinoza, Tirée des écrits de ce Fameux Philosophe, et du témoignage de plusieurs personnes dignes de foi, qui l'ont connu particulièrement: par Jean Colerus, Ministre de l'Eglise Luthérienne de la Haye.* 1706.¹ The book is evidently written by a man altogether unfit to appreciate the merits or demerits of Spinoza as an author; but it is not without some value to those who delight in the study of human character, as it supplies some chasms in the narrative of Bayle, and has every appearance of the most perfect impartiality and candour.

According to this account, Spinoza was a person of the most quiet and inoffensive manners; of singular temperance and mo-

¹ The life of Spinoza by Colerus, with some other curious pieces on the same subject, is reprinted in the complete edition of Spinoza's Works, published at Jena, in 1802.

deration in his passions; contented and happy with an income which barely supplied him with the necessities of life; and of too independent a spirit to accept of any addition to it, either from the favour of princes, or the liberality of his friends. In conformity to the law, and to the customs of his ancestors (which he adhered to, when he thought them not unreasonable, even when under the sentence of excommunication), he resolved to learn some mechanical trade; and fortunately selected that of grinding optical glasses, in which he acquired so much dexterity, that it furnished him with what he conceived to be a sufficient maintenance. He acquired also enough of the art of designing, to produce good portraits in chalk and china-ink, of some distinguished persons.

For the last five years of his life he lodged in the house of a respectable and religious family, who were tenderly attached to him, and from whom his biographer collected various interesting anecdotes. All of them are highly creditable to his private character, and more particularly show how courteous and amiable he must have been in his intercourse with his inferiors. In a bill presented for payment after his death, he is styled by Abraham Keveling, his barber-surgeon, *Benedict - Spinoza, of blessed memory*; and the same compliment is paid to him by the tradesman who furnished gloves to the mourners at his funeral.

These particulars are the more deserving of notice, as they rest on the authority of a very zealous member of the Lutheran communion, and coincide exactly with the account given of Spinoza by the learned and candid Mosheim. "This man (says he) observed, in his conduct, the rules of wisdom and probity much better than many who profess themselves Christians; nor did he ever endeavour to pervert the sentiments or to corrupt the morals of those with whom he lived; or to inspire, in his discourse, a contempt of religion or virtue."
.. (*Eccles. History*, translated by Dr. Maclaine, Vol. IV. p. 252.)

Among the various circumstances connected with Spinoza's domestic habits, Colerus mentions one very trifling singularity, which appears to me to throw a strong light on his general character, and to furnish some apology for his eccentricities as an author. The extreme feebleness of his constitution (for he was consumptive from the age of 20) having unfitted him for the enjoyment of convivial pleasures, he spent the greater part of the day in his chamber alone; but when fatigued with study, he would sometimes join the family party below, and take a part in their conversation, however insignificant its subject might be. One of the amusements with which he was accustomed to unbend his mind, was that of entangling flies in a

spider's web, or of setting spiders a fighting with each other; on which occasions (it is added) he would observe their combats with so much interest, that it was not unusual for him to be seized with immoderate fits of laughter. Does not this slight *trait* indicate very decidedly a tendency to insanity; a supposition by no means incompatible (as will be readily admitted by all who have paid any attention to the phenomena of madness) with that logical *acumen* which is so conspicuous in some of his writings?

His irreligious principles he is supposed to have adopted, in the first instance, from his Latin preceptor Vander Ende, a physician and classical scholar of some eminence; but it is much more probable, that his chief school of atheism was the synagogue of Amsterdam; where, without any breach of charity, a large proportion of the more opulent class of the assembly may be reasonably presumed to belong to the ancient sect of *Sadducees*. (This is, I presume, the idea of Heineccius in the following passage: "*Quamvis Spinoza Cartesii principia methodo mathematicâ demonstrata dederit; Pantheismum tamen ille non ex Cartesio didicit, sed domi habuit, quos sequeretur.*" In proof of this, he refers to a book entitled *Spinozismus in Judaismo*, by Waechterus.) The blasphemous curses pronounced upon him in the sentence of excommunication, were not well calculated to recal him to the faith of his ancestors: and when combined with his early and hereditary prejudices against Christianity, may go far to account for the indiscriminate war which he afterwards waged against priests of all denominations.

The ruling passion of Spinoza seems to have been the love of fame. "It is owned (says Bayle) that he had an extreme desire to immortalize his name, and would have sacrificed his life to that glory, though he should have been torn to pieces by the mob." (Art. *Spinoza*.)

Note (S.) p. 124.

IN proof of the impossibility of Liberty, Collins argues thus:

"A second reason to prove man a necessary agent is, because all his actions have a beginning. For whatever has a beginning must have a cause; and every cause is a necessary cause.

"If any thing can have a beginning, which has no cause, then nothing can produce something. And if nothing can produce something, then the world might have had a beginning without a cause; which is an absurdity not only charged on

atheists, but it is real absurdity in itself.***** Liberty, therefore, or a power to act or not to act, to do this or another thing under the same causes, is an *impossibility and Atheistical*.”¹

“And as Liberty stands, and can only be grounded on the absurd principles of Epicurean atheism; so the Epicurean atheists, who were the most popular and most numerous sect of the atheists of antiquity, were the great assertors of liberty; as, on the other side, the Stoics, who were the most popular and numerous sect among the religionaries of antiquity, were the great assertors of *fate and necessity*.” (Collins, p. 54.)

As to the above *reasoning* of Collins, it cannot be expected that I should, in the compass of a Note, “boulst this matter to the bran.” It is sufficient here to remark, that it derives all its plausibility from the unqualified terms in which the maxim (*μὴδὲν ἀναίτιον*) has frequently been stated. “In the idea of every *change* (says Dr. Price, a zealous advocate for the freedom of the will) is included that of its being an *effect*.” (*Review*, &c. p. 30, 3d Edition.) If this maxim be literally admitted without any explanation or restriction, it seems difficult to resist the conclusions of the Necessitarians. The proper statement of Price’s maxim evidently is, that “in every *change* we perceive in *inanimate* matter, the idea of its being an *effect* is necessarily involved;” and that he himself understood it under this limitation appears clearly from the application he makes of it to the point in dispute. As to intelligent and active beings, to affirm that they possess the power of self-determination, seems to me to be little more than an identical proposition. Upon an accurate analysis of the meaning of words, it will be found that the idea of an *efficient* cause implies the idea of *Mind*; and, consequently, that it is absurd to ascribe the volitions of *mind* to the efficiency of causes foreign to itself. To do so must unavoidably involve us in the inconsistencies of Spinozism; by forcing us to conclude that everything is passive, and nothing active in the universe; and, consequently, that the idea of a *First Cause* involves an impossibility.—But upon these hints I must not enlarge at present; and shall, therefore, confine myself to what falls more immediately within the scope of this Discourse, Collins’s Historical Statement with respect to the tenets of the Epicureans and the Stoics.

In confirmation of his assertion concerning the former, he refers to the following well known lines of Lucretius:

Denique si semper motus connectitur omnis,
&c. &c. (Lucret. Lib. 2. v. 251.)

¹ To the same purpose Edwards attempts to show, that “the scheme of free-will (by affording an exception to that dictate of common sense which refers every event to a cause) would destroy the proof *a posteriori* for the being of God.”

On the obscurity of this passage, and the inconsistencies involved in it, much might be said; but it is of more importance, on the present occasion, to remark its complete repugnance to the whole strain and spirit of the Epicurean Philosophy. This repugnance did not escape the notice of Cicero, who justly considers Epicurus as having contributed more to establish, by this puerile subterfuge, the authority of Fatalism, than if he had left the argument altogether untouched. “Nec vero quisquam magis confirmare mihi videtur non modo fatum, verum etiam necessitatem et vim omnium rerum, sustulisseque motus animi voluntarios, quam hic, qui aliter obsistere fato fatetur se non potuisse, nisi ad has commenticiâs declinationes confugisset.” (*Liber de Fato*, cap. 20.)

On the noted expression of Lucretius (*fatis avolsa voluntas*) some acute remarks are made in a note on the French translation by M. de la Grange. They are not improbably from the pen of the Baron d’Holbach, who is said to have contributed many notes to this translation. Whoever the author was, he was evidently strongly struck with the inconsistency of this particular tenet with the general principles of the Epicurean System.

“On est surpris qu’ Epicure fonde la liberté humaine sur la déclinaison des atomes. On demande si cette déclinaison est nécessaire, ou si elle est simplement accidentelle. Nécessaire, comment la liberté peut elle en être le resultat? Accidentelle, par quoi est elle déterminée? Mais on devrait bien plutôt être surpris, qu’il lui soit venu en idée de rendre l’homme libre dans un système qui suppose un enchainement nécessaire de causes et de d’effets. C’étoit une recherche curieuse, que la raison qui a pu faire d’Epicure l’Apôtre de la Liberté.” For the theory which follows on this point, I must refer to the work in question. (See *Traduction Nouvelle de Lucrece, avec des Notes*, par M. de la Grange, Vol. I. pp. 218, 219, 220, à Paris, 1768.)

But whatever may have been the doctrines of some of the ancient Atheists about man’s free-agency, it will not be denied, that in the *History of MODERN Philosophy*, the schemes of Atheism and of Necessity have been hitherto always connected together. Not that I would by any means be understood to say, that every Necessitarian must *ipso facto* be an Atheist, or even, that any presumption is afforded by a man’s attachment to the former sect, of his having the slightest bias in favour of the latter; but only that every modern Atheist I have heard of has been a Necessitarian. I cannot help adding, that the most consistent Necessitarians who have yet appeared, have been those who followed out their principles till they ended in *Spinozism*,

a doctrine which differs from atheism more in words than in reality.

In what Collins says of the Stoics in the above quotation, he plainly proceeds on the supposition that all Fatalists are of course Necessitarians;¹ and I agree with him in thinking, that this would be the case, if they reasoned logically. It is certain, however, that a great proportion of those who have belonged to the first sect have disclaimed all connection with the second. The Stoics themselves furnish one very remarkable instance. I do not know any author by whom the liberty of the will is stated in stronger and more explicit terms, than it is by Epictetus in the very first sentence of the *Enchiridion*. Indeed the Stoics seem, with their usual passion for exaggeration, to have carried their ideas about the freedom of the will to an unphilosophical extreme.

If the belief of man's free-agency has thus maintained its ground among professed Fatalists, it need not appear surprising, that it should have withstood the strong arguments against it, which the doctrine of the eternal decrees of God, and even that of the Divine prescience, appear at first sight to furnish. A remarkable instance of this occurs in St. Augustine (distinguished in ecclesiastical history by the title of *the Doctor of Grace*), who has asserted the liberty of the will in terms as explicit as those in which he has announced the theological dogmas with which it is most difficult to reconcile it. Nay, he has gone so far as to acknowledge the essential importance of this belief, as a motive to virtuous conduct. "*Quocirca nullo modo cogimur, aut retentâ præscientiâ Dei, tollere voluntatis arbitrium, aut retento voluntatis arbitrio, Deum, quod nefas est, negare præscium futurorum, sed utrumque amplectimur, utrumque fideliter et veraciter confitemur : illud, ut bene credamus ; hoc ut bene vivamus.*"

Descartes has expressed himself on this point nearly to the same purpose with St. Augustine. In one passage he asserts, in the most unqualified terms, that God is the cause of all the actions which depend on the Free-will of Man ; and yet, that the Will is really free, he considers as a fact perfectly established by the evidence of consciousness. "*Sed quemadmodum existentia divina cognitio non debet liberi nostri arbitrii certitudinem tollere, quia illud in nobismet ipsis experimur et sentimus ; ita neque liberi nostri arbitrii cognitio existentiam Dei apud nos dubiam facere debet. Independentia enim illa quam experi-*

¹ Collins states this more strongly in what he says of the Pharisees. "The Pharisees, who were a religious sect, ascribed all things to fate or to God's appointment, and it was the first article of their creed, that Fate and God do all, and, consequently, they could not assert a *true* liberty when they asserted a liberty together with this fatality and *necessity* of all things." (Collins, p. 54.)

mur, atque in nobis persentiscimus, et quæ actionibus nostris laude vel vituperio dignis efficiendis sufficit, non pugnat cum dependentia alterius generis, secundum quam omnia Deo subijciuntur." (Cartesii *Epistolæ*, Epist. VIII. IX. Pars i. These letters form part of his correspondence with the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Frederick, King of Bohemia, and Elector Palatine.

We are told by Dr. Priestley, in the very interesting *Memoirs of his own Life*, that he was educated in the strict principles of Calvinism; and yet it would appear, that while he remained a Calvinist, he entertained no doubt of his being a free-agent. "The doctrine of necessity (he also tells us) he *first* learned from Collins;¹ and was established in the belief of it by Hartley's *Observations on Man*." (*Ibid.* p. 19.) He farther mentions in another work, that "he was not a ready convert to the doctrine of necessity, and that, like Dr. Hartley himself, he gave up his liberty with great reluctance." *Preface to the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated*, 2d Edit. Birmingham, 1782, p. xxvii.)

These instances afford a proof, I do not say of the compatibility of man's free-agency with those schemes with which it seems most at variance, but of this compatibility in the opinion of some of the profoundest thinkers who have turned their attention to the argument. No conclusion, therefore, can be drawn against a man's belief in his own free-agency, from his embracing other metaphysical or theological tenets, with which it may appear to ourselves impossible to reconcile it.

As for the notion of liberty, for which Collins professes himself an advocate, it is precisely that of his predecessor Hobbes, who defines a free-agent to be, "he that can do if he will, and forbear if he will." (Hobbes's *Works*, p. 484, fol. ed.) The same definition has been adopted by Leibnitz, by Gravesande, by Edwards, by Bonnet, and by all our later necessitarians. It cannot be better expressed than in the words of Gravesande: "*Facultas faciendi quod libuerit, quæcunque fuerit voluntatis determinatio*." (*Introd. ad Philosoph.* § 115.)

¹ We are elsewhere informed by Priestley, that "it was in consequence of reading and studying the *Inquiry* of Collins, he was first convinced of the truth of the doctrine of Necessity, and was enabled to see the fallacy of most of the arguments in favour of Philosophical Liberty; though (he adds) I was much more confirmed in this principle by my acquaintance with Hartley's *Theory of the Human Mind*; a work to which I owe much more than I am able to express."—(*Preface*, &c. &c. p. xxvii.)

Dr. Priestley ascribes this peculiar notion of free-will to Hobbes as its author;¹ but it is, in fact, of much older date even among modern metaphysicians; coinciding exactly with the doctrine of those scholastic divines who contended for the *Liberty of Spontaneity*, in opposition to the *Liberty of Indifference*. It is, however, to Hobbes that the partizans of this opinion are indebted for the happiest and most popular illustration of it that has yet been given. "I conceive (says he) liberty to be rightly defined, The absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent. As, for example, the water is said to descend *freely*, or to have liberty to descend by the channel of the river, because there is no impediment that way: but *not* across, because the banks are impediments. And though water cannot ascend, yet men never say, it wants the *liberty* to ascend, but the *faculty* or power, because the impediment is in the nature of the water, and intrinsical. So also we say, he that is tied wants the *liberty* to go, because the impediment is not in him, but in his hands; whereas we say not so of him who is sick or lame, because the impediment is in himself." (*Treatise of Liberty and Necessity*.)

According to Bonnet, "moral liberty is the power of the mind to obey without constraint the impulse of the motives which act upon it." This definition, which is obviously the same in substance with that of Hobbes, is thus very justly, as well as acutely, animadverted on by Cuvier. "N'admettant aucune action sans motif, comme dit-il, il n'y a aucun effet sans cause, Bonnet définit la *liberté morale* le pouvoir de l'âme de suivre, sans contrainte les motifs dont elle éprouve l'impulsion; et résout ainsi les objections que l'on tire de la prévision de Dieu; mais peut-être aussi détournent-ils l'idée qu'on se fait d'ordinaire de la liberté. Malgré ces opinions que touchent au Matérialisme et au Fatalisme, Bonnet fut très religieux." *Biographie Universelle*, à Paris, 1812. Art. Bonnet.)

From this passage it appears, that the very ingenious writer was as completely aware as Clarke or Reid, of the unsoundness of the definition of *moral liberty* given by Hobbes and his followers; and that the ultimate tendency of the doctrine which limits the free-agency of man to (what has been called) the *liberty of spontaneity*, was the same, though in a more disguised form, with that of fatalism.

¹ "The doctrine of philosophical necessity," says Priestley, "is in reality a modern thing, not older, I believe, than Mr. Hobbes. Of the Calvinists, I believe Mr. Jonathan Edwards to be the first." (*Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity*, p. 195.)

Supposing this statement to be correct, does not the very modern date of Hobbes's alleged *discovery* furnish a very strong presumption against it?

For a complete exposure of the futility of this definition of *liberty*, as the word is employed in the controversy about man's free-agency, I have only to refer to Clarke's remarks on Collins, and to Dr. Reid's *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. In this last work, the various meanings of this very ambiguous word are explained with great accuracy and clearness.

The only two opinions which, in the actual state of metaphysical science, ought to be stated in contrast, are that of Liberty (or free-will) on the one side, and that of Necessity on the other. As to the *Liberty of Spontaneity* (which expresses a fact altogether foreign to the point in question), I can conceive no motive for inventing such a phrase, but a desire in some writers to veil the scheme of necessity from their readers, under a language less revolting to the sentiments of mankind; and, in others, an anxiety to banish it as far as possible from their own thoughts, by substituting instead of the terms in which it is commonly expressed, a circumlocution which seems, on a superficial view, to concede something to the advocates for liberty.

If this phrase (the *Liberty of Spontaneity*) should fall into disuse, the other phrase (the *Liberty of Indifference*),¹ which is commonly stated in opposition to it, would become completely useless; nor would there be occasion for qualifying with any epithet, the older, simpler, and much more intelligible word, *Free-will*.

The distinction between *physical* and *moral* necessity I conceive to be not less frivolous than those to which the foregoing animadversions relate. On this point I agree with Diderot, that the word *necessity* (as it ought to be understood in this dispute) admits but of *one* interpretation.

NOTE (T.) p. 124.

To the arguments of Collins, against man's free-agency, some of his successors have added, the inconsistency of this doctrine with the known *effects of education* (under which phrase they comprehend the moral effects of all the external circumstances in which men are involuntarily placed) in forming the characters of individuals.

The plausibility of this argument (on which much stress has been laid by Priestley and others) arises entirely from the mixture of truth which it involves; or, to express myself more correctly, from the evidence and importance of *the fact* on which it proceeds, when that fact is stated with due limitations.

¹ Both phrases are favourite expressions with Lord Kames in his discussions on this subject. See in particular the Appendix to his *Essay on Liberty and Necessity*, in the last Edition of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*.

That the influence of *education*, in this comprehensive sense of the word, was greatly underrated by our ancestors, is now universally acknowledged; and it is to Locke's writings, more than to any other single cause, that the change in public opinion on this head is to be ascribed. On various occasions, he has expressed himself very strongly with respect to the *extent* of this influence; and has more than once intimated his belief, that the great majority of men continue through life what early education had made them. In making use, however, of this strong language, his object (as is evident from the opinions which he has avowed in other parts of his works) was only to arrest the attention of his readers to the practical lessons he was anxious to inculcate; and not to state a metaphysical fact which was to be literally and rigorously interpreted in the controversy about liberty and necessity. The only sound and useful *moral* to be drawn from the *spirit* of his observations is, the duty of gratitude to Heaven for all the blessings, in respect of education and of external situation, which have fallen to our own lot; the impossibility of ascertaining the involuntary misfortunes by which the seeming demerits of others may have been in part occasioned, and in the same proportion diminished; and the consequent obligation upon ourselves, to think as charitably as possible of their conduct, under the most unfavourable appearances. The truth of all this I conceive to be implied in these words of Scripture, "To whom much is given, of him much will be required;" and, if possible, still more explicitly and impressively, in the Parable of the Talents.

Is not the use which has been made by Necessitarians of Locke's *Treatise on Education*, and other books of a similar tendency, only one instance more of that disposition, so common among metaphysical Sciolists, to appropriate to themselves the conclusions of their wiser and more sober predecessors, under the startling and imposing disguise of universal maxims, admitting neither of exception nor restriction? It is thus that Locke's judicious and refined remarks on the *Association of Ideas* have been exaggerated to such an extreme in the coarse *caricatures* of Hartley and of Priestley, as to bring, among cautious inquirers, some degree of discredit on one of the most important doctrines of modern philosophy. Or, to take another case still more in point; it is thus that Locke's reflections on the effects of education in modifying the intellectual faculties, and (where skilfully conducted) in supplying their original defects, have been distorted into the puerile paradox of Helvetius, that the mental capacities of the whole human race are the same at the moment of birth. It is sufficient for me here to throw out these hints, which will be found to apply equally to a large proportion of other theories started by modern metaphysicians.

Before I finish this note, I cannot refrain from remarking, with respect to the argument for Necessity drawn from the Divine prescience, that, if it be conclusive, it only affords an additional confirmation of what Clarke has said concerning the identity of the creed of the Necessitarians with that of the Spinozists. For, if God certainly foresees all the future volitions of his creatures, he must, for the same reason, foresee all *his own* future volitions; and if this knowledge infers a *necessity* of volition in the one case, how is it possible to avoid the same inference in the other?

NOTE (U.) p. 127.

A SIMILAR application of St. Paul's comparison of the *potter* is to be found both in Hobbes and in Collins. Also, in a note annexed by Cowley to his ode entitled *Destiny*; an ode written (as we are informed by the author) "upon an extravagant supposition of two angels playing a game at chess; which, if they did, the spectators would have reason as much to believe that the pieces moved themselves, as we have for thinking the same of mankind, when we see them exercise so many and so different. It was of old said by Plautus, *Dii nos quasi pilas homines habent*. "We are but tennis-balls for the gods to play withal," which they strike away at last, and still call for new ones; and St. Paul says, "*We are but the clay in the hand of the potter.*"

For the comparison of *the potter*, alluded to by these different writers, see the epistle to the Romans, Chap. ix. verses 18, 19, 20, 21. Upon these verses the only comment which I have to offer, is a remark of the Apostle Peter; that "In the epistles of our beloved brother Paul are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction."

The same similitude of *the potter* makes a conspicuous figure in the writings of Hobbes, who has availed himself of this, as of many other insulated passages of Holy Writ, in support of principles which are now universally allowed to strike at the very root of religion and morality. The veneration of Cowley for Hobbes is well known, and is recorded by himself in the ode which immediately precedes that on *Destiny*. It cannot, however, be candidly supposed, that Cowley understood the whole drift of Hobbes' doctrines. The contrary, indeed, in the present instance, is obvious from the ode before us; for while Cowley supposed the angels to move, like chess-men, the inhabitants of this globe, Hobbes (along with Spinoza) plainly conceived that the angels themselves, and even that Being to which he impi-

ously gave the name of *God*, were all of them moved, like knights and pawns, by the invisible hand of fate or necessity.

Were it not for the serious and pensive cast of Cowley's mind, and his solemn appeal to the authority of the apostle, in support of the doctrine of *destiny*, one would be tempted to consider the first stanzas of this ode in the light of a *jeu d'esprit*, introductory to the very characteristical and interesting picture of himself, with which the poem concludes.

NOTE (X.) p. 130.

“Tout ce qui est doit être, par cela même que cela est. Voilà la seule bonne philosophie. Aussi longtemps que nous ne connaissons pas cet univers, comme on dit dans l'école, *a priori*, tout est nécessité. La liberté est un mot vide de sens, comme vous allez voir dans la lettre de M. Diderot.” (Lettre de Grimm au Duc de Saxe-Gotha.)

“C'est ici mon cher, que je vais quitter le ton de prédicateur pour prendre, si je peux, celui de philosophe. Regardez-y de près, et vous verrez que le mot liberté est un mot vide de sens ; qu'il n'y a point, et qu'il ne peut y avoir d'êtres libres ; que nous ne sommes que ce qui convient à l'ordre général, à l'organisation, à l'éducation, et à la chaîne des événemens. Voilà ce qui dispose de nous invinciblement. On ne conçoit non plus qu'un être agisse sans motif, qu'un des bras d'une balance agisse sans l'action d'un poids, et le motif nous est toujours extérieur, étranger, attachés ou par une nature ou par une cause quelconque, qui n'est pas nous. Ce qui nous trompe, c'est la prodigieuse variété de nos actions, jointe à l'habitude que nous avons prise tout en naissant, de confondre le volontaire avec le libre. Nous avons tant loué, tant repris, nous l'avons été tant de fois, que c'est un préjugé bien vieux que celui de croire que nous et les autres voulons, agissons librement. Mais s'il n'y a point de liberté, il n'y a point d'action qui mérite la louange ou le blâme ; il n'y a ni vice, ni vertu, rien dont il faille récompenser ou châtier. Qu'est ce qui distingue donc les hommes ? La bienfaisance ou la malfaisance. Le malfaisant est un homme qu'il faut détruire en non punir ; la bienfaisance est une bonne fortune, et non une vertu. Mais quoique l'homme bien ou malfaisant ne soit pas libre, l'homme n'en est pas moins un être qu'on modifie ; c'est par cette raison qu'il faut détruire le malfaisant sur une place publique. De là les bons effets de l'exemple, des discours, de l'éducation, du plaisir, de la douleur, des grandeurs, de la misère, &c. ; de là une sorte de philosophie pleine de commisération, qui attache fortement aux bons, qui n'irrite non plus contre le méchant, que contre un ouragan qui nous remplit les yeux de poussière. Il n'y a qu'—

une sorte de causes à proprement parler ; ce sont les causes physiques. Il n'y a qu'une sorte de nécessité, c'est la même pour tous les êtres. Voilà ce qui me réconcilie avec le genre humain ; c'est pour cette raison que je vous exhortais à la philanthropie. Adoptez ces principes si vous les trouvez bons, ou montrez-moi qu'ils sont mauvais. Si vous les adoptez, ils vous réconcilieront aussi avec les autres et avec vous-même ; vous ne vous saurez ni bon ni mauvais gré d'être ce qui vous êtes. Ne rien reprocher aux autres, ne se repentir de rien ; voilà les premiers pas vers la sagesse. . Ce qui est hors de là est préjugé, fausse philosophie." (*Correspondance Littéraire, Philosophique, et Critique, adressée au Duc de Saxe-Gotha*, par le Baron de Grimm et par Diderot. Première Partie, Tom. I. pp. 300, 304, 305, 306, Londres, 1814.)

NOTE (Y). p. 143.

SEE in Bayle the three articles *Luther*, *Knox* and *Buchanan*. The following passage concerning Knox may serve as a specimen of the others. It is quoted by Bayle from the *Cosmographie Universelle* of Thevet, a writer who has long sunk into the contempt he merited, but whose zeal for legitimacy and the Catholic faith raised him to the dignity of almoner to Catherine de Medicis, and of historiographer to the King of France. I borrow the translation from the English *Historical Dictionary*.

"During that time the Scots never left England in peace ; it was when Henry VIII. played his pranks with the chalices, relics, and other ornaments of the English churches ; which tragedies and plays have been acted in our time in the kingdom of Scotland, by the exhortations of Noptz,¹ the first Scots minister of the bloody Gospel. This firebrand of sedition could not be content with barely following the steps of Luther, or of his master, Calvin, who had not long before delivered him from the gallies of the Prior of Capua, where he had been three years for his crimes, unlawful amours, and abominable fornications ; for he used to lead a dissolute life, in shameful and odious places, and had been also found guilty of the parricide and murder committed on the body of the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, by the contrivances of the Earl of Rophol, of James Lesclé, John Lesclé, their uncle, and William du Coy. This simonist, who had been a priest of our church, being fattened by the benefices he had enjoyed, sold them for ready money ; and finding that he could not make his cause good, he gave

¹ Thus Thevet (says Bayle) writes the name of Knox.

himself up to the most terrible blasphemies. He persuaded also several devout wives and religious virgins to abandon themselves to wicked adulterers. Nor was this all. During two whole years, he never ceased to rouse the people, encouraging them to take up arms against the Queen, and to drive her out of the kingdom, which he said was elective, as it had been formerly in the time of heathenism..... The Lutherans have churches and oratories. Their ministers sing psalms, and say mass; and though it be different from ours, yet they add to it the Creed, and other prayers, as we do. And when their ministers officiate, they wear the cope, the chasuble, and the surplice, as ours do, being concerned for their salvation, and careful of what relates to the public worship. Whereas the Scots have lived these twelve years past without laws, without religion, without ceremonies, constantly refusing to own a King or a Queen, as so many brutes, suffering themselves to be imposed upon by the stories told them by this arch-hypocrite Noptz, a traitor to God and to his country, rather than to follow the pure Gospel, the councils, and the doctrine of so many holy doctors, both Greek and Latin, of the Catholic church."

If any of my readers be yet unacquainted with the real character and history of this distinguished person, it may amuse them to compare the above passage with the very able, authentic, and animated account of his life, lately published by the reverend and learned Dr. M'Crie.

NOTE (Z.) p. 156.

DR. BLAIR (whose estimate of the distinguishing beauties and imperfections of Addison's style reflects honour on the justness and discernment of his taste) has allowed himself to be carried along much too easily, by the vulgar sneers at Addison's want of philosophical depth. In one of his lectures on rhetoric he has even gone so far as to accuse Addison of misapprehending, or, at least, of *mistating* Locke's doctrine concerning *secondary qualities*. But a comparison of Dr. Blair's own statement with that which he censures, will not turn out to the advantage of the learned critic; and I willingly lay hold of this example, as the point at issue turns on one of the most refined questions of metaphysics. The words of Addison are these:—

"Things would make but a poor appearance to the eye, if we saw them only in their proper figures and motions. And what reason can we assign for their exciting in us many of those ideas which are different from any thing that exists in the object themselves (for such are light and colours), were it not to add supernumerary ornaments to the universe, and make it more agreeable to the imagination?"

After quoting this sentence, Dr. Blair proceeds thus:—

“Our author is now entering on a theory, which he is about to illustrate, if not with much philosophical accuracy, yet with great beauty of fancy and glow of expression. A strong instance of his want of accuracy appears in the manner in which he opens the subject. For what meaning is there in things *exciting in us many of those ideas which are different from any thing that exists in the objects* ? No one, sure, ever imagined that our ideas exist in the objects. Ideas, it is agreed on all hands, can exist no where but in the mind. What Mr. Locke’s philosophy teaches, and what our author should have said, is, *exciting in us many ideas of qualities which are different from any thing that exists in the objects.*”

Let us now attend to Locke’s theory as stated by himself:—

“From whence I think it is easy to draw this observation. That the *ideas* of primary qualities of bodies are *resemblances* of them, and *their patterns* do really exist in the bodies themselves, but the *ideas* produced in us by these secondary qualities have no *resemblance* of them at all. There is nothing *like* our ideas existing in the bodies themselves. They are in the bodies we denominate from them, only a power to produce these sensations in us. And what is sweet, blue, or warm in *idea*, is but the certain bulk, figure, and motion of the insensible parts in the bodies themselves, which we call so.”

The inaccuracy of Locke in conceiving that our *ideas* of primary qualities are *resemblances* of these qualities, and that the *patterns* of such ideas exist in the bodies themselves, has been fully exposed by Dr. Reid. But the *repetition* of Locke’s inaccuracy (supposing Addison to have been really guilty of it) should not be charged upon him as a *deviation* from his master’s doctrine. To all, however, who understand the subject, it must appear evident, that Addison has, in this instance, *improved* greatly on Locke, by keeping out of view what is most exceptionable in his language, while he has retained all that is solid in his doctrine. For my own part, I do not see how Addison’s expressions could be altered to the better, except, perhaps, by substituting the words *unlike to*, instead of *different from*. But in this last phrase, Addison has been implicitly followed by Dr. Blair, and certainly would not have been disavowed as an interpreter by Locke himself. Let me add, that Dr. Blair’s proposed emendation (“*exciting in us many ideas of qualities, which are different from any thing that exists in the objects*”), if not wholly unintelligible, deviates much farther from Locke’s meaning than the correspondent clause in its original state. The additional words *of qualities* throw an obscurity over the whole

proposition, which was before sufficiently precise and perspicuous.¹

My principal reason for offering these remarks in vindication of Addison's account of secondary qualities was, to prepare the way for the sequel of the passage animadverted on by Dr. Blair.

"We are everywhere entertained with pleasing shows and apparitions. We discover imaginary glories in the heavens and in the earth, and see some of this visionary beauty poured out upon the whole creation. But what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with, did all her colouring disappear, and the several distinctions of light and shade vanish?" In short, our souls are delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing delusion, and we walk about like the enchanted hero of a romance, who sees beautiful castles, woods, and meadows, and, at the same time, hears the warbling of birds and the purling of streams; but, upon the finishing of some secret spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, and the disconsolate knight finds himself on a barren heath, or in a solitary desert."

In this passage one is at a loss whether most to admire the author's depth and refinement of thought, or the singular felicity of fancy displayed in its illustration. The image of the *enchanted hero* is so unexpected, and, at the same time, so exquisitely appropriate, that it seems itself to have been conjured up by an enchanter's wand. Though introduced with the unpretending simplicity of a poetical simile, it has the effect of shedding

¹ Another passage, afterwards quoted by Dr. Blair, might have satisfied him of the clearness and accuracy of Addison's ideas on the subject.

"I have here supposed that my reader is acquainted with that great modern discovery, which is, at present, universally acknowledged by all the inquirers into natural philosophy; namely, that light and colours, *as apprehended by the imagination*, are only ideas in the mind, and not qualities that have any existence in matter. As this is a truth which has been proved incontestibly by many modern philosophers, if the English reader would see the notion explained at large, he may find it in the eighth book of Mr. Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*."

I have already taken notice (*Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. I. Note P.) of the extraordinary precision of the above statement, arising from the clause printed in Italics. By a strange slip of memory I ascribed the merit of this very judicious qualification, not to Addison, but to Dr. Akenside, who transcribed it from the *Spectator*.

The last quotation affords me also an opportunity of remarking the correctness of Addison's information about the history of this doctrine, which most English writers have conceived to be an original speculation of Locke's. From some of Addison's expressions, it is more than probable, that he had derived his first knowledge of it from Malebranche.

² On the supposition made in this sentence, the face of Nature, instead of presenting a "rough unsightly sketch," would, it is evident, become wholly invisible. But I need scarcely say, this does not render Mr. Addison's allusion less pertinent.

the light of day on one of the darkest corners of metaphysics. Nor is the language in which it is conveyed unworthy of the attention of the critic; abounding throughout with those natural and happy graces, which appear artless and easy to all but to those who have attempted to copy them.

The praise which I have bestowed on Addison as a commentator on this part of Locke's *Essay* will not appear extravagant to those who may take the trouble to compare the conciseness and elegance of the foregoing extracts with the prolixity and homeliness of the author's text. (See Locke's *Essay*, Book II. chap. viii. §§ 17, 18.) It is sufficient to mention here, that his chief illustration is taken from "the effects of manna on the stomach and guts."

NOTE (AA.) p. 172.

For the following note I am indebted to my learned friend Sir William Hamilton, Professor of Universal History in the University of Edinburgh.

"The *Clavis Universalis* of Arthur Collier, though little known in England, has been translated into German. It is published in a work entitled "*Samlung*, &c. &c. literally, "A Collection of the most distinguished authors who deny the existence of their own bodies, and of the whole material world,—containing the dialogues of Berkeley, between Hylas and Philonous, and Collier's *Universal Key* translated, with Illustrative Observations, and an Appendix, wherein the existence of Body is demonstrated, by John Christopher Eschenbach, Professor of Philosophy in Rostock." (Rostock, 1756, 8vo.) The remarks are numerous, and show much reading. The Appendix contains, 1. An exposition of the opinion of the Idealists, with its grounds and arguments. 2. A proof of the external existence of body. The argument on which he chiefly dwells to show the existence of matter is the same with that of Dr. Reid, in so far as he says "a direct proof must not here be expected; in regard to the fundamental principles of human nature, this is seldom possible, or rather is absolutely impossible." He argues at length, that the Idealist has no better proof of the existence of his soul, than of the existence of his body; "when an Idealist says, *I am a thinking being; of this I am certain from internal conviction*;—I would ask from whence he derives this certainty, and why he excludes from this conviction the possibility of deception. He has no other answer than this, *I feel it. It is impossible that I can have any representation of self without the consciousness of being a thinking being.* In the same manner, Eschenbach argues that the *feeling* applies to the existence of body,

and that the ground of belief is equally strong and conclusive, in respect to the reality of the *objective*, as of the *subjective*, in perception."

NOTE (BB.) p. 204.

"And yet Diderot, in some of his lucid intervals, seems to have thought and felt very differently."

THE following passage (extracted from his *Pensées Philosophiques*) is pronounced by La Harpe to be not only one of the most eloquent which Diderot has written, but to be one of the best comments which is any where to be found on the Cartesian argument for the existence of God. It has certainly great merit in point of reasoning, but I cannot see with what propriety it can be considered as a comment upon the argument of Descartes; nor am I sure if, in point of eloquence, it be as well suited to the English as to the French taste.

"Convenez qu'il y auroit de la folie à refuser à vos semblables la faculté de penser. Sans doute, mais que s'ensuit il de là? Il s'ensuit, que si l'univers, que dis-je l'univers, si l'aile d'un papillon m'offre des traces mille fois plus distinctes d'une intelligence que vous n'avez d'indices que votre semblable à la faculté de penser, il est mille fois plus fou de nier qu'il existe un Dieu, que de nier que votre semblable pense. Or, que cela soit ainsi, c'est à vos lumières, c'est à votre conscience que j'en appelle. Avez-vous jamais remarqué dans les raisonnemens, les actions, et la conduite de quelque homme que ce soit, plus d'intelligence, d'ordre, de sagacité de conséquence, que dans le mécanisme d'un insècte? La divinité n'est elle pas aussi clairement empreinte dans l'œil d'un ciron, que la faculté de penser dans les ecrits du grand Newton? Quoi! le monde formé prouverait moins d'intelligence, que le monde expliqué? Quelle assertion! l'intelligence d'un premier être ne m'est pas mieux démontrée par ses ouvrages, que la faculté de penser dans un philosophe par ses ecrits? Songez donc que je ne vous objecte que l'aile d'un papillon, quand je pourrais vous écraser du poids de l'univers."

This, however, was certainly not the creed which Diderot professed in his more advanced years. The article, on the contrary, which immediately follows the foregoing quotation, there is every reason to think, expresses his real sentiments on the subject. I transcribe it at length, as it states clearly and explicitly the same argument which is indirectly hinted at in a late publication by a far more illustrious author.

"J'ouvre les cahiers d'un philosophie célèbre, et je lis. 'Athées, je vous accorde que le mouvement est essentiel à la

matière ; qu'en concluez-vous ? que le monde resulte du jet fortuit d'atomes ? J'aimerois autant que vous me dissiez que l'Illiade d'Homère ou la Henriade de Voltaire est un resultat de jets fortuits de caractères ? Je me garderai bien de faire ce raisonnement à un athée. Cette comparaison lui donneroit beau jeu. Selon les lois de l'analyse des sorts, me diroit-il, je ne doit être surpris qu'une chose arrive, lorsqu'elle est possible, et que la difficulté de l'événement est compensée par la quantité des jets. Il y a tels nombre de coups dans lesquels je gagerois avec avantage d'amener cent mille six à la fois avec cent mille dez. Quelque que fût la somme finie de caractères avec laquelle on me proposeroit d'engendrer fortuitement l'Illiade, il y a telle somme finie de jets qui me rendroit la proposition avantageuse ; mon avantage seroit même infinie, si la quantité de jets accordée étoit infini," &c. &c. (*Pensées Philosophiques*, par Diderot, XXI.)

My chief reason for considering this as the genuine exposition of Diderot's own creed is, that he omits no opportunity of suggesting the same train of thinking in his other works. It may be distinctly traced in the following passage of his *Traité du Beau*, the substance of which he has also introduced in the article BEAU of the *Encyclopédie*.

"Le beau n'est pas toujours l'ouvrage d'une cause intelligente ; le mouvement etablit souvent, soit dans un être considéré solitairement, soit entre plusieurs êtres comparés entr'eux, une multitude prodigieuse de rapports surprenans. Les cabinets d'histoire naturelle en offrent un grand nombre d'exemples. Les rapports sont alors des resultats de combinaisons fortuites, du moins par rapport à nous. La nature imite en se jouant, dans cent occasions, les productions d'art ; et l'on pourroit demander, je ne dis pas si ce philosophe qui fut jeté par une tempête sur les bords d'une Ile inconnue, avoit raison de se crier, à la vue de quelques figures de geometrie ; '*Courage mes amis, voici des pas d'hommes ;*' mais combien il faudroit remarquer de rapports dans un être, pour avoir une certitude complète qu'il est l'ouvrage d'un artiste ¹ (en quelle occasion, un seul défaut de symmetrie prouveroit plus que toute somme donnée de rapports) ; comment sont entr'eux le temps de l'action de la cause fortuite, et les rapports observés dans les effets produits ; et si (à l'exception des œuvres du Tout-Puisant) ² il y a des cas où le nombre des rapports ne puisse jamais être compensé par celui des jets."

¹ Is not this precisely the sophistical mode of questioning known among Logicians by the name of *Sorites* or *Acervus* ? 'Vitiosum sane (says Cicero) et captiosum genus.' (*Acad. Quæst. Lib. IV. xvi.*)

² To those who enter fully into the spirit of the foregoing reasoning, it is unnecessary to observe, that this parenthetical clause is nothing better than

With respect to the passages here extracted from Diderot, it is worthy of observation, that if the atheistical argument from chances be conclusive in its application to that order of things which we behold, it is not less conclusive when applied to every other possible combination of atoms which imagination can conceive, and affords a mathematical proof, that the fables of Grecian mythology, the tales of the genii, and the dreams of the Rosicrusians, *may*, or rather *must*, all of them be somewhere or other realized in the infinite extent of the universe; a proposition which, if true, would destroy every argument for or against any given system of opinions founded on the reasonableness or the unreasonableness of the tenets involved in it; and would, of consequence, lead to the subversion of the whole frame of the human understanding.¹

Mr. Hume, in his *Natural History of Religion* (Sect. XI.), has drawn an inference from the internal evidence of the Heathen Mythology, in favour of the supposition, that it may not be altogether so fabulous as is commonly supposed. "The whole mythological system is so natural, that in the vast variety of planets and worlds contained in this universe, *it seems more than probable*, that somewhere or other it is really carried into execution." The argument of Diderot goes much farther, and leads to an extension of Mr. Hume's conclusion to all conceivable systems, whether *natural* or not.

But further, since the human mind, and all the numberless displays of wisdom and of power which it has exhibited, are ultimately to be referred to a fortuitous concourse of atoms, why might not the Supreme Being, such as we are commonly taught to regard him, have been Himself (as well as the Gods of Epi-

an ironical *salvo*. If the argument proves any thing it leads to this general conclusion, that the apparent order of the universe affords no evidence whatever of the existence of a designing cause.

¹ The atheistical argument here quoted from Diderot is, at least, as old as the time of Epicurus.

Nam certè neque consilio primordia rerum
Ordine se quæque, atque sagaci mente locârunt;
Nec quos quæque darent motus pepigere profectò;
Sed quia multimodis, multis, mutata, per omne
Ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,
Omne genus motûs, et cætûs experiundo,
Tandem deveniunt in taleis disposituras,
Qualibus hæc rebus consistit summa creata.

(Lucret. Lib. I. l. 1020.)

And still more explicitly in the following lines:

Nam cùm respicias immensi temporis omne
Præteritum spatium; tum motus materiai
Multimodi quàm sint; facîle hoc adcredere possis,
Semina sæpe in eodem, ut nunc sunt, ordine posta.

(Ibid. Lib. III. l. 867.)

curus)¹ the result of the continued operation of the same blind causes? or rather, *must* not such a Being have necessarily resulted from these causes operating from all eternity, through the immensity of space?—a conclusion, by the way, which, according to Diderot's own principles, would lead us to refer the era of his origin to a period indefinitely more remote than any given point of time which imagination can assign; or, in other words, to a period to which the epithet *eternal* may with perfect propriety be applied. The amount, therefore, of the whole matter is this, that the atheistical reasoning, as stated by Diderot, leaves the subject of natural, and, I may add, of revealed religion, precisely on the same footing as before, without invalidating, in the very smallest degree, the evidence for any one of the doctrines connected with either; nay more, superadding to this evidence, a mathematical demonstration of the *possible* truth of all those articles of belief which it was the object of Diderot to subvert from their foundation.

It might be easily shown, that these principles, if pushed to their legitimate consequences, instead of establishing the just authority of reason in our constitution, would lead to the most unlimited credulity on all subjects whatever; or (what is only another name for the same thing) to that state of mind, which, in the words of Mr. Hume, “does not consider any one proposition as more certain, or even as more probable, than another.”

The following curious and (in my opinion) instructive anecdote has a sufficient connection with the subject of this note, to justify me in subjoining it to the foregoing observations. I transcribe it from the Notes annexed to the Abbé de Lille's poem, entitled *La Conversation*. (A Paris, 1812.)

“Dans la société du Baron d'Holbach, Diderot proposa un jour de nommer un *avocat de Dieu*, et on choisit l'Abbé Galiani. Il s'assit et débuta ainsi:

“Un jour à Naples, un homme de la Basilicate prit devant nous, six déz dans un cornet, et paria d'amener rafle de six. Je dis cette chance étoit possible. Il l'amena sur le champ une seconde fois; je dis la même chose. Il remit les déz dans le cornet trois, quatre, cinq fois, et toujours rafle de six. *Sangué di Bacco*, m'écriai-je, *les déz sont pipés*; et ils l'étoient.

“Philosophes, quand je considère l'ordre toujours renaissant de la nature, ses lois immuables, ses révolutions toujours constantes dans une variété infinie; cette chance unique et conservatrice d'un univers tel que nous le voyons, qui revient sans cesse, malgré cent autres millions de chances de perturbation et de destruction possibles, je m'écrie : *certes la nature est pipée !*”

¹ *Cic. de Nat. Deor. Lib. 1. XXIV.*

The argument here stated strikes me as irresistible, nor ought it at all to weaken its effect, that it was spoken by the mouth of the Abbé Galiani. Of this extraordinary person I shall have occasion afterwards to speak as a political economist.

Whatever his own professed principles may have been, this theory of the *loaded die* appears evidently, from the repeated allusions to it in his familiar correspondence, to have produced a very deep impression on his mind. (See *Correspondance inédite de l'Abbé Galiani*, &c. Vol. I. pp. 18, 42, 141, 142, à Paris, 1818.)

As the old argument of the atomical atheist is plainly that on which the school of Diderot are still disposed to rest the strength of their cause, I shall make no apology for the length of this note. The *sceptical* suggestions on the same subject which occur in Mr. Hume's *Essay on the Idea of Necessary Connection*, and which have given occasion to so much discussion in this country, do not seem to me to have ever produced any considerable impression on the French philosophers.

Note (CC.) p. 206.

AMONG the contemporaries of Diderot, the author of the *Spirit of Laws* is entitled to particular notice, for the respect with which he always speaks of natural religion. A remarkable instance of this occurs in a letter to Dr. Warburton, occasioned by the publication of his *View of Bolingbroke's Philosophy*. The letter, it must be owned, savours somewhat of the political religionist; but how fortunate would it have been for France, if, during its late revolutionary governments, such sentiments as those here expressed by Montesquieu had been more generally prevalent among his countrymen! "Celui qui attaque la religion révélée, n'attaque que la religion révélée; mais celui que attaque la religion naturelle attaque toutes les religions du monde.... Il n'est pas impossible d'attaquer une religion révélée, parce qu'elle existe par des faits particuliers, et que les faits par leur nature peuvent être une matière de dispute; mais il n'en est pas de même de la religion naturelle; elle est tirée de la nature de l'homme, dont on ne peut pas disputer encore. J'ajoute à ceci, quel peut être le motif d'attaquer la religion révélée en Angleterre? On l'y a tellement purgé de tout préjugé destructeur qu'elle n'y peut faire, de mal et qu'elle y peut faire, au contraire, une infinité de biens. Je sais, qu'un homme en Espagne ou en Portugal que l'on va brûler, ou qui craint d'être brûlé, parce qu'il ne croit point de certains articles dépendans ou non de la religion révélée, a un juste sujet de l'attaquer, parce qu'il peut avoir quelque espérance de pour-

voir à sa défense naturelle : mais il n'en est pas de même en Angleterre, où tout homme qui attaque la religion révélée l'attaque sans intérêt, et où cet homme, quand il réussiroit, quand même il auroit raison dans le fond, ne feroit que détruire une infinité de biens pratiques, pour établir une vérité purement spéculative." (For the whole letter, see the 4to edit. of Montesquieu's *Works*. Paris, 1738. Tome V. p. 391. Also Warburton's *Works* by Hurd, Vol. VII. p. 553. London, 1758.)

In the foregoing passage, Montesquieu hints more explicitly than could well have been expected from a French Magistrate, at a consideration which ought always to be taken into the account, in judging of the works of his countrymen, when they touch on the subject of religion ; I mean, the corrupted and intolerant spirit of that system of faith which is immediately before their eyes. The eulogy bestowed on the church of England is particularly deserving of notice ; and should serve as a caution to Protestant writers against making common cause with the defenders of the church of Rome.

With respect to Voltaire, who, amidst all his extravagancies and impieties, is well known to have declared open war against the principles maintained in the *Système de la Nature*, it is remarked by Madame de Staël, that two different epochs may be distinguished in his literary life ; the one, while his mind was warm from the philosophical lessons he had imbibed in England ; the other, after it became infected with those extravagant principles which, soon after his death, brought a temporary reproach on the name of Philosophy. As the observation is extended by the very ingenious writer to the French nation in general, and draws a line between two classes of authors who are frequently confounded together in this country, I shall transcribe it in her own words.

" Il me semble qu'on pourroit marquer dans le dix-huitième siècle, en France, deux époques parfaitement distinctes, celle dans laquelle l'influence de l'Angleterre s'est fait sentir, et celle où les esprits se sont précipités dans la destruction : Alors les lumières se sont changées en incendie, et la philosophie, magicienne irritée, a consumé le palais où elle avoit étalé ses prodiges.

" En politique, Montesquieu appartient à la première époque, Raynal à la seconde ; en religion, les écrits de Voltaire, qui avoit la tolérance pour but, sont inspirés par l'esprit de la première moitié du siècle ; mais sa misérable et vaniteuse irréligion a flétri la seconde." *De l'Allemagne*, Tome III. pp. 37, 38.)

Nothing, in truth, can be more striking than the contrast between the spirit of Voltaire's early and of his later productions. From the former may be quoted some of the sublimest sentiments any where to be found, both of religion and of morality.

In some of the latter, he appears irrecoverably sunk in the abyss of fatalism. Examples of both are so numerous, that one is at a loss in the selection. In making choice of the following, I am guided chiefly by the comparative shortness of the passages.

“ Consulte Zoroastre et Minos, et Solon,
Et le sage Socrate, et le grand Ciceron :
Ils ont adoré tous un maître, un juge, un père ;—
Ce système sublime à l’homme est nécessaire.
C’est le sacré lien de la société,
Le premier fondement de la sainte équité ;
Le frein du scélérat, l’espérance du juste.
Si les cieux depouillés de leur empreinte auguste
Pouvoient cesser jamais de le manifester,
Si Dieu n’existoit pas, il faudroit l’inventer.”

Nor is it only on this fundamental principle of religion that Voltaire, in his better days, delighted to enlarge. The existence of a natural law engraved on the human heart, and the liberty of the human will, are subjects which he has repeatedly enforced and adorned with all his philosophical and poetical powers. What can be more explicit, or more forcible, than the following exposition of the inconsistencies of fatalism?

“ Vois de la liberté cet ennemi mutin,
Aveugle partisan d’un aveugle destin ;
Entends comme il consulte, approuve, ou délibère,
Entends de quel reproche il couvre un adversaire,
Vois comment d’un rival il cherche à se venger,
Comme il punit son fils, et le veut corriger.
Il le croyoit donc libre ?—Oui sans doute, et lui-même
Dément à chaque pas son funeste système.
Il mentoit à son cœur, en voulant expliquer
Ce dogme absurde à croire, absurde à pratiquer.
Il reconnoit en lui le sentiment qu’il brave,
Il agit comme libre et parle comme esclave.”

This very system, however, which Voltaire has here so severely reprobated, he lived to avow as the creed of his more advanced years. The words, indeed, are put into the mouth of a fictitious personage ; but it is plain, that the writer meant to be understood as speaking his own sentiments. “ Je vois

¹ A thought approaching very nearly to this occurs in one of Tillotson’s Sermons. “The being of God is so comfortable, so convenient, so necessary to the felicity of Mankind, that (as Tully admirably says), *Diî immortales ad usum hominum fabricati pene videantur*.—If God were not a necessary being of himself, he might almost be said to be made for the use and benefit of Man.” For some ingenious remarks on this quotation from Cicero, see Jortin’s Tracts, Vol. I. p. 371.

une chaîne immense, dont tout est chaînon ; elle embrasse, elle serre aujourd'hui la nature," &c. &c.

" Je suis donc ramené malgré moi à cette ancienne idée, que je vois être la base de tous les systèmes, dans laquelle tous les philosophes retombent après mille détours, et qui m'est démontré par toutes les actions des hommes, par les miennes, par tous les événemens que j'ai lus, que j'ai vus, et aux-quelles j'ai eu part ; c'est le Fatalisme, c'est la Necessité dont je vous ai déjà parlé." (*Lettres de Memmius à Cicéron*. See *Œuvres de Voltaire, Mélanges*, Tome IV. p. 358. 4to. Edit. Geneve, 1771.)

Notwithstanding, however, this change in Voltaire's philosophical opinions, he continued to the last his zealous opposition to atheism.¹ But in what respects it is more pernicious than fatalism, it is not easy to discover.

A reflection of La Harpe's, occasioned by some strictures of Voltaire's upon Montesquieu, applies with equal force to the numberless inconsistencies which occur in his metaphysical speculations. " Les objets de méditation étoient trop étrangers à l'excessive vivacité de son esprit. Saisir fortement par l'imagination les objets qu'elle ne doit montrer que d'un côté, c'est ce qui est du Poète ; les embrasser sous toutes les faces, c'est ce qui est du Philosophe, et Voltaire étoit trop exclusivement l'un pour être l'autre." (*Cours de Littérature*. Tome XV. pp. 46, 47.)

A late author² has very justly reprobated that *spiritual deification of Nature* which has been long fashionable among the French ; and which, according to his own account, is at present not unfashionable in Germany. It is proper, however, to observe, that this mode of speaking has been used by two very different classes of writers ; by the one with an intention to keep as much as possible the Deity out of their view, while studying his works ; by the other, as a convenient and well understood metaphor, by means of which the frequent and irreverent mention of the name of God is avoided in philosophical arguments. It was with this last view, undoubtedly, that it was so often employed by Newton, and other English philosophers of the same school. In general, when we find a writer speaking of the *wise* or of the *benevolent intentions* of nature, we should be slow in imputing to him any leaning towards atheism. Many of the finest instances of Final Causes, it is certain,

¹ See the *Dict. Philosophique*, Art. *Athéisme*. See also the Strictures on the *Système de la Nature* in the *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* ; the very work from which the above quotation is taken.

² Frederick Schlegel. *Lectures on the History of Literature*. Vol. II. p. 169. (Edinburgh, 1818.)

which the eighteenth century has brought to light, have been first remarked by inquirers who seem to have been fond of this phraseology ; and of these inquirers, it is possible that some would have been less forward in bearing testimony to the truth, had they been forced to avail themselves of the style of theologians. These speculations, therefore, concerning the *intentions* or *designs of Nature*, how reprehensible soever and even absurd in point of strict logic the language may be in which they are expressed may often be, nay, have often been, a step towards something higher and better ; and, at any rate, are of a character totally different from the blind chance of the Epicureans, or the conflicting principles of the Manicheans.

NOTE (DD.) p. 237.

“ *In the attempt, indeed, which Kant has made to enumerate the general ideas which are not derived from experience, but arise out of the pure understanding, Kant may well lay claim to the praise of originality.*” The object of this problem is thus stated by his friend, Mr. Schulze, the author of the Synopsis formerly quoted. (The following translation is by Dr. Willich, *Elements*, &c. p. 45.)

“ To investigate the whole store of original notions discoverable in our understanding, and which lie at the foundation of all our knowledge ; and at the same time to authenticate their true descent, by showing that they are not derived from experience, but are pure productions of the understanding.

“ 1. The perceptions of objects contain, indeed, the matter of knowledge, but are in themselves blind and dead, and not knowledge ; and our soul is merely passive in regard to them.

“ 2. If these perceptions are to furnish knowledge, the understanding must think of them, and this is possible only through notions (conceptions), which are the peculiar form of our understanding, in the same manner as space and time are the form of our sensitive faculty.

“ 3. These notions are active representations of our understanding-faculty ; and as they regard *immediately* the perceptions of objects, they refer to the objects themselves only mediately.

“ 4. They lie in our understanding as pure notions *a priori*, at the foundation of all our knowledge. They are necessary forms, radical notions, categories (predicaments), of which all our knowledge of them must be compounded : And the table of them follows.

"Quantity ; unity, plurality, totality."

"Quality ; reality, negation, limitation.

"Relation ; substance, cause, reciprocation.

"Modality ; possibility, existence, necessity.

"5. Now, to think and to judge is the same thing ; consequently, every notion contains a particular form of judgment concerning objects. There are *four* principal *genera* of judgments : They are derived from the above four possible functions of the understanding, each of which contains under it *three species* ; namely, with respect to

"Quantity, they are universal, particular, singular judgments.

"Quality, they are affirmative, negative, infinite judgments.

"Relation, they are categorical, hypothetical, disjunctive judgments.

"Modality, they are problematical, assertory, apodictical judgments."

These tables speak for themselves without any comment.

NOTE (EE.) p. 238.

KANT'S notions of *Time* are contained in the following seven propositions : "1. *Idea temporis non oritur sed supponitur a sensibus.* 2. *Idea temporis est singularis, non generalis.* Tempus enim quodlibet non cogitatur, nisi tanquam pars unius ejusdem temporis immensi. 3. *Idea itaque temporis est intuitus, et quoniam ante omnem sensationem concipitur, tanquam conditio respectuum in sensibilibus obviorem, est intuitus, non sensualis, sed purus.* 4. *Tempus est quantum continuum et legum continui in mutationibus universi principium.* 5. *Tempus non est objectivum aliquid et reale, nec substantia, nec accidens, nec relatio, sed subjectiva conditio per naturam mentis humanæ necessaria, quælibet sensibilia, certa lege sibi co-ordinandi, et intuitus purus.* 6. Tempus est conceptus verissimus, et, per omnia possibilia sensuum objecta, in infinitum patens, intuitivæ representationis conditio. 7. Tempus itaque est *principium formale mundi sensibilis absolute primum.*"

With respect to *Space*, Kant states a series of similar propositions, ascribing to it very nearly the same metaphysical attributes as to *Time*, and running as far as possible a sort of parallel between them. "A. *Conceptus spatii non abstrahitur a sensationibus externis.* B. *Conceptus spatii est singularis representatio omnia in se comprehendens, non sub se continens notio abstracta et communis.* C. *Conceptus spatii itaque est intuitus purus ; cum*

sit conceptus singularis; sensationibus non conflatus, sed omnis sensationis externæ forma fundamentalis. D. *Spatium non est aliquid objectivi et realis, nec substantia, nec accidens, nec relatio; sed subjectivum et ideale, e natura mentis stabili lege proficiscens, veluti schema, omnia omnino, externe sensa sibi coordinandi.* E. Quamquam *conceptus spatii*, ut objectivi alicujus, et realis entis vel affectionis, sit imaginarius, nihilo tamen secius *respective ad sensibilia quæcunque*, non solum est *verissimus*, sed et omnis veritatis in sensualitate externa fundamentum."

These propositions are extracted from a Dissertation written by Kant himself in the Latin language.¹ Their obscurity, therefore, cannot be ascribed to any misapprehension on the part of a translator. It was on this account that I thought it better to quote them in his own unaltered words, than to avail myself of the corresponding passage in Born's Latin version of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

To each of Kant's propositions concerning Time and Space I shall subjoin a short comment, following the same order in which these propositions are arranged above.

1. That the idea of *Time* has no resemblance to any of our sensations, and that it is, therefore, not derived from sensation immediately and directly, has been very often observed; and, if nobody had ever observed it, the fact is so very obvious, that the enunciation of it could not entitle the author to the praise of much ingenuity. Whether "this idea be *supposed* in all our sensations," or (as Kant explains himself more clearly in his third proposition) "be *conceived* by the mind prior to all sensation," is a question which seems to me at least doubtful; nor do I think the opinion we form concerning it a matter of the smallest importance. One thing is certain, that this idea is an inseparable concomitant of every act of memory with respect to past events; and that, in whatever way it is acquired, we are irresistibly led to ascribe to the thing itself an existence independent of the will of any being whatever.

2. On the second proposition I have nothing to remark. The following is the most intelligible translation of it that I can give. "The idea of Time is singular, not general; for any particular length of Time can be conceived only as a part of one and the same immense whole."

3. From these premises (such as they are) Kant concludes, that the idea of Time is *intuitive*; and that this intuition, being prior to the exercise of the senses, is not empirical but pure. The conclusion here must necessarily partake of the

¹ *De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis forma et principiis.* Dissertatio pro loco professionis Log. et Metaph. Ordinariæ rite sibi Vindicando; quam exigentibus statutis Academicis publice tuebitur IMMANUEL KANT.—Regiomonti, 1770.

uncertainty of the premises from which it is drawn, but the meaning of the author does not seem to imply any very erroneous principle. It amounts, indeed, to little more than an explanation of some of his peculiar terms.

4. That Time is a *continued quantity* is indisputable. To the latter clause of the sentence I can annex no meaning but this, that time enters as an essential element into our conception of the law of continuity, in all its various applications to the changes that take place in Nature.

5 In this proposition Kant assumes the truth of that much contested, and, to me, incomprehensible doctrine, which denies the objective reality of time. He seems to consider it merely as a subjective *condition*, inseparably connected with the frame of the Human Mind, in consequence of which it arranges sensible phenomena, according to a certain law, in the order of succession.

6. What is meant by calling Time *a true conception*, I do not profess to understand; nor am I able to interpret the remainder of the sentence in any way but this, that we can find no limits to the range thus opened in our conceptions to the succession of sensible events.

7. The conclusion of the whole matter is, that Time is "absolutely the first formal principle of the sensible world." I can annex no meaning to this; but I have translated the original, word for word, and shall leave my readers to their own conjectures.

A. It appears from this, that, in the opinion of Kant, the idea of Space is connate with the mind, or, at least, that it is prior to any information received from the senses. But this doctrine seems to me not a little doubtful. Indeed, I rather lean to the common theory, which supposes our first ideas of Space or Extension to be formed by abstracting this attribute from the other qualities of matter. The idea of Space, however, in whatever manner formed, is manifestly accompanied with an irresistible conviction, that Space is necessarily existent, and that its annihilation is impossible; nay, it appears to me to be also accompanied with an irresistible conviction, that Space cannot possibly be extended in more than three dimensions. Call either of these propositions in question, and you open a door to universal scepticism.

B. I can extract no meaning from this, but the nugatory proposition, that our conception of Space leads us to consider it as *the place* in which all things are comprehended.

C. "The conception of Space, therefore, is a *pure intuition*." This follows as a necessary corollary (according to Kant's own

definition) from Prop. A. What is to be understood by the clause which asserts, that Space is the fundamental *form* of every external sensation, it is not easy to conjecture. Does it imply merely that the conception of *Space* is necessarily involved in all our notions of things external? In this case, it only repeats over, in different and most inaccurate terms, the last clause of Prop. B. What can be more loose and illogical than the phrase *external sensation*?

D. That Space is neither a *substance* nor an *accident*, not a *relation*, may be safely granted; but does it follow from this that it is nothing *objective*, or, in other words, that it is a mere creature of the imagination? This, however, would seem to be the idea of Kant; and yet I cannot reconcile it with what he says in Prop. E., that the conception of Space is the foundation of all the truth we ascribe to our perceptions of external objects. (The author's own words are—*omnis veritatis in sensualitate externa fundamentum* !)¹

Upon the whole, it appears to me, that, among these various propositions, there are some which are quite unintelligible; that others assume, as first principles, doctrines which have been disputed by many of our most eminent philosophers; that others, again, seem to aim at involving plain and obvious truths in darkness and mystery; and that not one is expressed with the simplicity and precision which are the natural results of clear and accurate thinking. In considering time and space as the *forms* of all sensible phenomena, does Kant mean any thing more but this,—that we necessarily refer every sensible phenomenon to some point of space, or to some instant of time? If this was really his meaning, he has only repeated over, in obscurer language, the following propositions of Newton: "*Ut ordo partium temporis est immutabilis, sic etiam ordo partium spatii. Moveantur hæc de locis suis, et movebuntur (ut ita dicam) de seipsis. Nam tempora et spatia sunt sui ipsorum et rerum omnium quasi loca. In tempore, quoad ordinem successionis; in spatio, quoad*

¹ Mr. Nitsch has remarked this difficulty, and has attempted to remove it. "The most essential objection (he observes) to Kant's system is, that it leads to scepticism; because it maintains, that the figures in which we see the external objects clothed are not inherent in those objects, and that consequently space is something *within*, and not without the mind." (pp. 144, 145.) "It may be farther objected (he adds); that, if there be no external space, there is also no external world. But this is concluding by far too much from these premises. If there be no external space, it will follow, that we are not authorized to assign *extension* to external things, but there will follow no more." (p. 149.) Mr. Nitsch then proceeds to obviate these objections; but his reply is far from satisfactory, and is indeed not less applicable to the doctrine of Berkeley than to that of Kant. This point, however, I do not mean to argue here. The concessions which Nitsch has made are quite sufficient for my present purpose. They serve at least to satisfy my own mind, that I have not misrepresented Kant's meaning.

ordinem situs locantur universa. De illorum essentia est ut sint loca : et loca primaria moveri absurdum est."

I have quoted this passage, not from any desire of displaying the superiority of Newton over Kant, but chiefly to show how very nearly the powers of the former sink to the same level with those of the latter, when directed to inquiries unfathomable by the human faculties. What abuse of words can be greater than to say, That neither the parts of time nor the parts of space can be *moved* from their *places*?¹ In the *Principia* of Newton, however, this incidental discussion is but a spot on the sun. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is a fair specimen of the rest of the work, and forms one of the chief pillars of the whole system, both metaphysical and moral.

NOTE (FF.) p. 240.

THE following quotation will account for the references which I have made to Mr. Nitsch among the expounders of Kant's Philosophy. It will also serve to show that the *Critique of Pure Reason* has still *some* admirers in England, not less enthusiastic than those it had formerly in Germany.

"In submitting this fourth Treatise on the Philosophy of Kant to the reader" (says the author of these articles in the *Encyclopædia Londinensis*), "I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of publicly acknowledging the great assistance which I have derived in my literary pursuits, from my excellent and highly valued friend Mr. Henry Richter. To him I am indebted for the clearness and perspicuity with which the thoughts of the immortal Kant have been conveyed to the public. Indeed, his comprehensive knowledge of the system, as well as his enthusiastic admiration of its general truth, render him a most able and desirable co-operator. Should, therefore, any good result to mankind from our joint labours in the display of this vast and profound system, he is justly entitled to his share of the praise. It is with sincere pleasure that I reflect upon that period, now two and-twenty years ago, when we first studied together under the same master, Frederic Augustus Nitsch, who originally imported the seeds of TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY from its native country, to plant them in our soil ; and though, as is usually the case, many of those seeds were scattered by the wind, I trust that a sufficient number have taken root to maintain the growth

¹ Was it not to avoid the palpable incongruity of this language that Kant was led to substitute the word *forms* instead of *places* ; the former word not seeming to be so obviously inapplicable as the latter to time and space in common ; or, to speak more correctly, being, from its extreme vagueness equally unmeaning when applied to both?

of this vigorous and flourishing plant, till the time shall come, when, by its general cultivation, England may be enabled to enrich other nations with the most perfect specimens of its produce. Professor Nitsch, who thus bestowed upon our country her first attainments in the department of *Pure Science*, has paid the debt of nature. I confess it is some reflection upon England, that she did not foster and protect this immediate disciple of the father of philosophy; but the necessities of this learned and illustrious man unfortunately compelled him to seek that subsistence elsewhere, which was withheld from him here. At Rostock, about the year 1813, this valuable member of society, and perfect master of the philosophy he undertook to teach, entered upon his immortal career as a reward for his earthly services. It is with the most heartfelt satisfaction that I add my mite of praise to his revered memory. But for him, I might ever have remained in the dark regions of sophistry and uncertainty."

NOTE (GG.) p. 253.

AMONG the secondary mischiefs resulting from the temporary popularity of Kant, none is more to be regretted than the influence of his works on the habits, both of thinking and of writing, of some very eminent men, who have since given to the world histories of philosophy. That of Tenneman in particular (a work said to possess great merit) would appear to have been vitiated by this unfortunate bias in the views of its author. A very competent judge has lately said of it, that "it affords, as far as it is completed, the most accurate, the most minute, and the most rational view we yet possess of the different systems of philosophy; but that the critical philosophy being chosen as the vantage ground from whence the survey of former systems is taken, the continual reference in Kant's own language to his peculiar doctrines, renders it frequently impossible for those who have not studied the dark works of this modern Heraclitus to understand the strictures of the historian on the systems even of Aristotle or Plato." (See the article BRUCKER in this *Supplement*.) We are told by the same writer, that "among the learned of Germany, Brucker has never enjoyed a very distinguished reputation." This I can very easily credit; but I am more inclined to interpret it to the disadvantage of the German taste, than to that of the historian. Brucker indeed not distinguished by any extraordinary measure of depth or of acuteness; but in industry, fidelity, and sound judgment, he has few superiors; qualities of infinitely greater value in the undertaker of a historical work, than that passion

for systematical refinement, which is so apt to betray the best-intentioned writers into false glosses on the opinions they record.

When the above passage was written, I had not seen the work of Buhle. I have since had an opportunity of looking into the French translation of it, published at Paris in 1816; and I must frankly acknowledge, that I have seldom met with a greater disappointment. The account there given of the Kantian system, to which I turned with peculiar eagerness, has, if possible, involved to *my* apprehension, in additional obscurity, that mysterious doctrine. From this, however, I did not feel myself entitled to form an estimate of the author's merits as a philosophical historian, till I had read some other articles of which I considered myself as better qualified to judge. The following short extract will, without the aid of any comment, enable such of my readers as know anything of the literary history of Scotland, to form an opinion upon this point for themselves.

“Reid n'attaqua les systèmes de ses prédécesseurs et notamment celui de Hume, que parce qu'il se croyait convaincu de leur défaut de fondement. Mais un autre antagoniste, non moins célèbre, du scepticisme de Hume, fut, en outre, guidé par la haine qu'il avoit vouée à son illustre compatriote, lequel lui répondit avec beaucoup d'aigreur et d'animosité. James Beattie, professeur de morale à Edimbourg, puis ensuite, de logique et de morale à l'Université d'Aberdeen, obtint la préférence sur Hume lorsqu'il fut question de remplir la chaire vacante à Edimbourg. Cette circonstance devint sans doute la principale source de l'inimitié que les deux savans conquirent l'un pour l'autre, et qui influa même sur le ton qu'ils employèrent dans les raisonnemens par lesquels ils se combattirent.” (Tome V. p. 235.)

To this quotation may I be pardoned for adding a few sentences relative to myself? “L'ouvrage de Dugald Stewart, intitulé, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, est un syncrétisme des opinions de Hartley et de Reid. Stewart borne absolument la connoissance, tant de l'âme que des choses extérieures, à ce que le sens commun nous en apprend, et croit pouvoir ainsi mettre l'étude de la métaphysique à l'abri du reproche de rouler sur des choses qui dépassent la sphère de notre intelligence, ou qui sont tout-à-fait inutiles dans la pratique de la vie Les chapitres suivans renferment le développement du principe de l'association des idées. Ils sont presque entièrement écrits d'après Hartley. Stewart fait dériver de ce

principe toutes les facultés intellectuelles et pratiques de l'homme." (Tom. V. pp. 330, 331.)

Of the discrimination displayed by Buhle in the classification of systems and of authors, the title prefixed to his 19th chapter may serve as a specimen: "*Philosophy of Condillac, of Helvetius, of Baron d'Holbach, of Robinet, of Bonnet, of Montesquieu, of Burlamaqui, of Vattel, and of Reid.*"

But the radical defect of Buhle's work is, the almost total want of references to original authors. We are presented only with the general results of the author's reading, without any guide to assist us in confirming his conclusions when right, or in correcting them when wrong. This circumstance is of itself sufficient to annihilate the value of any historical composition.

Sismondi, in mentioning the history of modern literature by Bouterwek, takes occasion to pay a compliment (and, I have no doubt, a very deserved one) to German scholars in general; observing, that he has executed his task—"avec une étendue d'érudition, et une *loyauté* dans la manière d'en faire profiter ses lecteurs, qui semblent propres aux savans Allemands." (*De la Litt. du Midi de l'Europe*, Tom. I. p. 13, à Paris, 1813.) I regret that my ignorance of the German language has prevented me from profiting by a work of which Sismondi has expressed so favourable an opinion; and still more, that the only history of philosophy from the pen of a contemporary German scholar, which I have had access to consult, should form so remarkable an exception to Sismondi's observation.

The contents of the preceding note lay me under the necessity, in justice to myself, of taking some notice of the following remark on the first part of this *Dissertation*, by an anonymous critic. (See *Quarterly Review*, Vol. XVII. p. 42.)

"In the plan which Mr. Stewart has adopted, if he has not consulted his *strength*, he has at least consulted his *ease*; for, supposing a person to have the requisite talent and information, the task which our author has performed, is one which, with the historical abstracts of Buhle or Tenneman, cannot be supposed to have required any very laborious meditation."

On the insinuation contained in the foregoing passage, I abstain from offering any comment. I have only to say, that it is *now*, for the first time (Summer of 1820), that I have seen the work of Buhle; and that I have never yet had an opportunity of seeing that of Tenneman. From what I have found in the one, and from what I have heard of the other, I am strongly inclined to suspect, that when the anonymous critic wrote the above sentence, he was not less ignorant than myself of the works of these two historians. Nor can I refrain from adding (which I do with perfect confidence), that no person competent

to judge on such a subject can read with attention this Historical Sketch, without perceiving that its merits and defects, whatever they may be, are at least all my own.

NOTE (HH.) p. 260.

OF the Scottish authors who turned their attention to metaphysical studies, prior to the Union of the two Kingdoms, I know of none so eminent as George Dalgarno of Aberdeen, author of two works, both of them strongly marked with sound philosophy, as well as with original genius. The one published at London, 1660, is entitled, "*Ars signorum, vulgò character universalis et lingua philosophica, qua poterunt, homines diversissimorum idiomatum, spatio duarum septimanarum, omnia animi sui sensa (in rebus familiaribus) non minus intelligibiliter, sive scribendo, sive loquendo, mutuo communicare, quam linguis propriis vernaculis. Præterea, hinc etiam poterunt juvenes, philosophiæ principia, et veram logicæ praxin, citius et facilius multo imbibere, quam ex vulgaribus philosophorum scriptis.*" The other work of Dalgarno is entitled, "*Didascalocophus, or the Deaf and Dumb Man's Tutor.*" Printed at Oxford, 1680. I have given some account of the former in the notes at the end of the first volume of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*; and of the latter, in a *Memoir* published in Vol. VII. of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*. As they are now become extremely rare, and would together form a very small octavo volume, I cannot help thinking that a bookseller, who should reprint them, would be fully indemnified by the sale. The fate of Dalgarno will be hard, indeed, if, in addition to the unjust neglect he experienced from his contemporaries, the proofs he has left of his philosophical talents shall be suffered to sink into total oblivion.

Lord Stair's *Physiologia Nova Experimentalis* (published at Leyden in 1686) is also worthy of notice in the literary history of Scotland. Although it bears few marks of the eminent talents which distinguished the author, both as a lawyer and as a statesman, it discovers a very extensive acquaintance with the metaphysical as well as with the physical doctrines, which were chiefly in vogue at that period; more particularly with the leading doctrines of Gassendi, Descartes, and Malebranche. Many acute and some important strictures are made on the errors of all the three, and at the same time complete justice is done to their merits; the writer every where manifesting an independence of opinion and a spirit of free inquiry, very uncommon among the philosophers of the seventeenth century.

The work is dedicated to the Royal Society of London, of the utility of which institution, in promoting experimental knowledge, he appears to have been fully aware.

The limits of a note will not permit me to enter into farther details concerning the state of philosophy in Scotland, during the interval between the Union of the Crowns and that of the Kingdoms. The circumstances of the country were indeed peculiarly unfavourable to it. But memorials still exist of a few individuals, sufficient to show, that the philosophical taste, which has so remarkably distinguished our countrymen during the eighteenth century, was in some measure an inheritance from their immediate predecessors. Leibnitz, I think, somewhere mentions the number of learned Scotchmen by whom he was visited in the course of their travels. To one of them (Mr. Burnet of Kemney) he has addressed a most interesting letter, dated in 1697, on the general state of learning and science in Europe; opening his mind on the various topics which he introduces, with a freedom and confidence highly honourable to the attainments and character of his correspondent. Dr. Arbuthnot, who was born about the time of the Restoration, may serve as a fair specimen of the very liberal education which was then to be had in some of the Scottish Universities. The large share which he is allowed to have contributed to the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* abundantly attests the variety of his learning, and the just estimate he had formed of the philosophy of the schools; and in one or two passages, where he glances at the errors of his contemporaries, an attentive and intelligent reader will trace, amid all his pleasantry, a metaphysical depth and soundness which seem to belong to a later period.—Is there no Arbuthnot now, to chastise the follies of our craniologists?

NOTE (II.) p. 285.

THE letter which gives occasion to this note was written twenty years after the publication of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. As it relates, however, to the history of Mr. Hume's studies previous to that publication, I consider this as the proper place for introducing it. The Dialogue to which the letter refers was plainly that which appeared after Mr. Hume's death, under the title of *Dialogues on Natural Religion*.

“DEAR SIR,

Ninewells, March 19, 1751.

“You would perceive by the sample I have given you, that I make Cleanthes the hero of the dialogue. Whatever you

can think of to strengthen that side of the argument will be most acceptable to me. Any propensity you imagine I have to the other side crept in upon me against my will; and it is not long ago that I burned an old manuscript book, wrote before I was twenty, which contained, page after page, the gradual progress of my thoughts on that head. It begun with an anxious search after arguments to confirm the common opinion; doubts stole in, dissipated, returned, were again dissipated, returned again, and it was a perpetual struggle of a restless imagination against inclination, perhaps against reason.

“I have often thought that the best way of composing a dialogue would be for two persons that are of different opinions about any question of importance, to write alternately the different parts of the discourse, and reply to each other. By this means that vulgar error would be avoided of putting nothing but nonsense into the mouth of the adversary; and, at the same time, a variety of character and genius being upheld, would make the whole look more natural and unaffected. Had it been my good fortune to live near you, I should have taken on me the character of Philo in the dialogue, which you'll own I could have supported naturally enough; and you would not have been averse to that of Cleanthes. I believe, too, we could both of us have kept our tempers very well; only you have not reached an absolute philosophical indifference on these points. What danger can ever come from ingenious reasoning and inquiry? The worst speculative sceptic ever I knew was a much better man than the best superstitious devotee and bigot. I must inform you, too, that this was the way of thinking of the ancients on this subject. If a man made profession of philosophy, whatever his sect was, they always expected to find more regularity in his life and manners than in those of the ignorant and illiterate. There is a remarkable passage of Appian to this purpose. That historian observes, that, notwithstanding the established prepossession in favour of learning, yet some philosophers who have been trusted with absolute power have very much abused it; and he instances in Critias, the most violent of the Thirty, and Aristion who governed Athens in the time of Sylla. But I find, upon inquiry, that Critias was a professed Atheist, and Aristion an Epicurean, which is little or nothing different; and yet Appian wonders at their corruption as much as if they had been Stoics or Platonists. A modern zealot would have thought that corruption unavoidable.

“I could wish that Cleanthes's argument could be so analyzed as to be rendered quite formal and regular. The propensity of the mind towards it, unless that propensity were as strong and universal as that to believe in our senses and experi-

ence, will still, I am afraid, be esteemed a suspicious foundation. 'Tis here I wish for your assistance. We must endeavour to prove that this propensity is somewhat different from our inclination to find our own figures in the clouds, our face in the moon, our passions and sentiments even in inanimate matter. Such an inclination may and ought to be controlled, and can never be a legitimate ground of assent.

"The instances I have chosen for Cleanthes are, I hope, tolerably happy; and the confusion in which I represent the sceptic seems natural. But, *si quid novisti rectius*, &c.

"You ask me, *if the idea of cause and effect is nothing but vicinity?* (you should have said constant vicinity or regular conjunction)—*I would gladly know whence is that farther idea of causation against which you argue?* The question is pertinent; but I hope I have answered it. We feel, after the constant conjunction, an easy transition from one idea to the other, or a connection in the imagination; and, as it is usual for us to transfer our own feelings to the objects on which they are dependent, we attach the internal sentiment to the external objects. If no single instances of cause and effect appear to have any connection, but only repeated similar ones, you will find yourself obliged to have recourse to this theory.

"I am sorry our correspondence should lead us into these abstract speculations. I have thought, and read, and composed very little on such questions of late. Morals, politics, and literature, have employed all my time; but still the other topics I must think more curious, important, entertaining, and useful, than any geometry that is deeper than Euclid. If, in order to answer the doubts started, new principles of philosophy must be laid, are not these doubts themselves very useful? Are they not preferable to blind and ignorant assent? I hope I can answer my own doubts: but, if I could not, is it to be wondered at? To give myself airs and speak magnificently; might I not observe that Columbus did not conquer empires and plant colonies?

"If I have not unravelled the knot so well in these last papers I sent you, as perhaps I did in the former, it has not, I assure you, proceeded from want of good will. But some subjects are easier than others; and sometimes one is happier in one's researches and inquiries than at other times. Still I have recourse to the *si quid novisti rectius*; not in order to pay you a compliment, but from a real philosophical doubt and curiosity."

An unfinished draught of the letter, to which the foregoing seems to have been the reply, has been preserved among Sir

¹ The original is in the possession of the Earl of Minto.

Gilbert Elliot's papers. This careless fragment is in his own hand-writing, and exhibits an interesting specimen of the progress made in Scotland among the higher classes, seventy years ago, not only in sound philosophy, but in purity of English style.

“DEAR SIR,

“Inclosed I return your papers, which, since my coming to town, I have again read over with the greatest care. The thoughts which this last perusal of them has suggested I shall set down, merely in compliance with your desire, for I pretend not to say anything new upon a question which has already been examined so often and so accurately. I must freely own to you, that to me it appears extremely doubtful, if the position which Cleanthes undertakes to maintain can be supported, at least in any satisfactory manner, upon the principles he establishes and the concessions he makes. If it be only from effects exactly similar that experience warrants us to infer a similar cause, then I am afraid it must be granted, that the works of Nature resemble not so nearly the productions of man as to support the conclusion which Cleanthes admits can be built only on that resemblance. The two instances he brings to illustrate his argument are indeed ingenious and elegant; the first, especially, which seemingly carries great weight along with it: the other, I mean that of the Vegetating Library, as it is of more difficult apprehension, so I think it is not easy for the mind either to retain or to apply it. But, if I mistake not, this strong objection strikes equally against them both. Cleanthes does no more than substitute two artificial instances in the place of natural ones: but if these bear no nearer a resemblance than natural ones to the effects which we have experienced to proceed from men, then nothing *can* justly be inferred from them; and if this resemblance be greater, then nothing farther *ought* to be inferred from them. In one respect, however, Cleanthes seems to limit his reasonings more than is necessary even upon his own principles. Admitting, for once, that experience is the only source of our knowledge, I cannot see how it follows, that, to enable us to infer a similar cause, the effects must not only be similar, but exactly and precisely so. Will not experience authorize me to conclude, that a machine or piece of mechanism was produced by human art, unless I have happened previously to see a machine or piece of mechanism exactly of the same sort? Point out, for instance, the contrivance and end of a watch to a peasant, who had never before seen anything more curious than the coarsest instruments of husbandry, will he not immediately conclude, that this watch is an effect produced by human art and design? And I would still farther ask, does a spade or a plough much more resemble a watch than a watch

does an organized animal? The result of our whole experience, if experience indeed be the only principle, seems rather to amount to this: There are but two ways in which we have ever observed the different parcels of matter to be thrown together; either at random, or with design and purpose. By the first, we have never seen produced a regular complicated effect, corresponding to a certain end; by the second, we uniformly have. If, then, the works of nature, and the productions of man, resemble each other in this one general characteristic, will not even experience sufficiently warrant us to ascribe to both a similar though proportionable cause? If you answer, that abstracting from the experience we acquire in this world, order and adjustment of parts is no proof of design, my reply is, that no conclusions, drawn from the nature of so chimerical a being as man, considered abstracted from experience, can at all be listened to. The principles of the human mind are clearly so contrived as not to unfold themselves till the proper objects and proper opportunity and occasion be presented. There is no arguing upon the nature of man but by considering him as grown to maturity, placed in society, and become acquainted with surrounding objects. But if you should still farther urge, that, with regard to instances of which we have no experience, for ought we know, matter may contain the principles of order, arrangement, and the adjustment of final causes, I should only answer, that whoever can conceive this proposition to be true, has exactly the same idea of matter that I have of mind. I know not if I have reasoned justly upon Cleanthes's principles, nor is it indeed very material. The purpose of my letter is barely to point out what to me appears the fair and philosophical method of proceeding in this inquiry. That this universe is the effect of an intelligent designing cause, is a principle which has been most universally received in all ages and in all nations; the proof uniformly appealed to is, the admirable order and adjustment of the works of nature. To proceed, then, experimentally and philosophically, the first question in point of order seems to be, what is the effect which the contemplation of the universe, and the several parts of it, produces upon a considering mind? This is a question of fact; a popular question, the discussion of which depends not upon refinements and subtlety, but merely upon impartiality and attention. I ask, then, what is the sentiment which prevails in one's mind, after having considered not only the more familiar objects that surround him, but also all the discoveries of Natural Philosophy and Natural History; after having considered not only the general economy of the universe, but also the most minute parts of it, and the amazing adjustment of means to ends with a precision unknown to human art, and in instances innumerable? Tell me (to use

the words of Cleanthes), does not the idea of a Contriver flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation? Expressions how just! (yet in the mouth of Cleanthes you must allow me to doubt of their propriety.) Nor does this conviction only arise from the consideration of the inanimate parts of the creation, but still more strongly from the contemplation of the faculties of the understanding, the affections of the heart, and the various instincts discoverable both in men and brutes; all so properly adapted to the circumstances and situation both of the species and the individual. Yet this last observation, whatever may be in it, derives no force from experience. For who ever saw a mind produced? If we are desirous to push our experiments still farther, and inquire, whether the survey of the universe has regularly and uniformly led to the belief of an intelligent cause? Shall we not find, that, from the author of the book of Job to the preachers at Boyle's Lecture, the same language has been universally held? No writer, who has ever treated this subject, but has either applied himself to describe, in the most emphatical language, the beauty and order of the universe, or else to collect together and place in the most striking light, the many instances of contrivance and design which have been discovered by observation and experiment. And when they have done this, they seem to have imagined that their task was finished, and their demonstration complete; and indeed no wonder,—for it seems to me, that we are scarce more assured of our own existence, than that this well-ordered universe is the effect of an intelligent cause.

“ This first question, then, which is indeed a question of fact, being thus settled upon observations which are obvious and unrefined, but not on that account the less satisfactory, it becomes the business of the philosopher to inquire, whether the conviction arising from these observations be founded on the conclusions of reason, the reports of experience, or the dictates of feeling, or possibly upon all these together; but if his principles shall not be laid so wide as to account for the fact already established upon prior evidence, we may, I think, safely conclude, that his principles are erroneous. Should a philosopher pretend to demonstrate to me, by a system of optics, that I can only discern an object when placed directly opposite to my eye, I should certainly answer, your system must be defective, for it is contradicted by matter of fact.” * * * * *

When this *Dissertation* was nearly ready for the press, the posthumous works of my late very learned, ingenious, and amiable friend, Dr. Thomas Brown, were published. The con-

tributions which the philosophy of the human mind owes to his talents and industry, belong exclusively to the literary history of the nineteenth century; and will, I doubt not, receive ample justice from the pens of some of his numerous pupils. On certain points on which we differed in opinion, more particularly on the philosophical merits of Lord Bacon and of Dr. Reid, I should have been tempted to offer some additional explanations, if the circumstance of his recent and much lamented death had not imposed silence on me, upon all questions of controversy between us. The state of my health, besides, has been such during the winter, that I have found the task of correcting the press more than sufficient to furnish employment both to my mind and body; and, in fact, I have been forced to deny myself the satisfaction of reading Dr. Brown's *Lectures*, till my own performance shall be in the hands of the public.

THE END.

A

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE

Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical,

AND

Political Philosophy,

SINCE THE REVIVAL OF LETTERS IN EUROPE.

IN TWO DISSERTATIONS.

By DUGALD STEWART, Esq.

F. R. SS. LONDON AND EDINBURGH, &c. &c. &c.

BOSTON:

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